

September, 1924

25 Cents

SMART SET



**When Her First Husband
Came Back!—**

*A vivid life-drama
of scarlet bondage...*

by

D. H. Lawrence

author of

BOTH PREMIUMS

FREE

50 inch Table Cloth and
6 Napkins. 6 Silver-Plated
Knives and 6 Forks



This superb 110-piece set, with initial in 2 places on every piece, decorated in blue and gold, with gold covered handles, consists of:
12 Dinner Plates, 9 in. 12 Cups
12 Breakfast Plates, 7 in. 12 Saucers
12 Soup Plates, 7 1/2 in. 12 Individual Bread and Butter Plates, 6 1/2 in.
12 Cereal Dishes, 6 in. 1 Platter, 13 1/2 in.
12 Fruit Dishes, 5 1/2 in.

This
Design and
Your Initial

in Two
Places On
Every Piece

1 Platter, 11 1/2 in.
1 Celery Dish, 8 1/2 in.
1 Sauce Boat Tray,
7 1/2 inches
1 Butter Plate, 6 in.
1 Vegetable Dish,
10 1/2 in., with lid
(2 pieces)

1 Deep Bowl, 8 1/2 in.
1 Oval Baker, 9 in.
1 Small Deep Bowl,
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1 Gravy Boat, 7 1/2 in.
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1 Sugar Bowl with
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NO MONEY DOWN!

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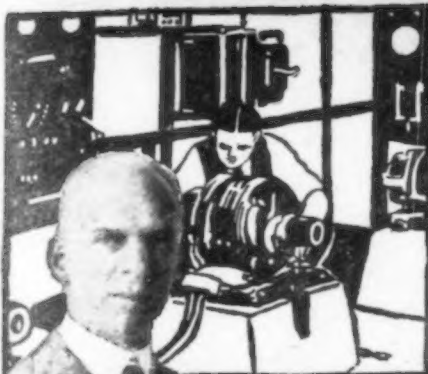
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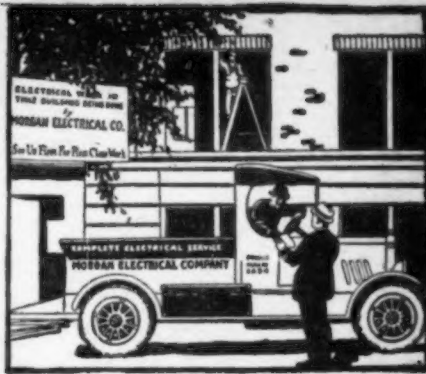
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SMART SET

In this issue

- The Uniqueness of Roxelane—a sketch by Ellis O. Briggs 9
- The Borderline by D. H. Lawrence 11
- The strange inscrutable forces that are at work behind the human heart—that borderline of terror and mystery where men and women can lose themselves—that is the country explored by D. H. Lawrence in his startling story of married love. No writer reads the subtleties of the human heart more clearly than this mystic. There is a ruthlessness about "The Borderline" which attracts and repels at the same time. It is a fascinating and emotional tale.
- Around the Punch Bowl—a sketch by Charles G. Shaw 25
- High-Low Jack and the Dame—a sketch by Art Smith 26
- Of Roses—Verse by Mary Carolyn Davies 26
- Myself for Doris by Mabel Dunham Thayer 27
- Broadway!—a street of heartbreaks and sudden unexplainable impulses. A girl who has climbed high up the ladder of success where the lights dazzle—such is Doris, the heroine of this story. Beneath her, under the glitter of lights and the sound of revelry, are shadows—and curses. . . . Doris' battle is not won till the last paragraph.
- Thoughts on the Back of a Menu—a sketch by Warren Spencer 38
- One Day in a Lifetime by Isabel Leighton 39
- She was exultant when the morning broke, because that day was to be one day in a lifetime! Then several things happened, all at once, and without warning, and the day turned out far differently than she had anticipated. . . . But it was still the most important day she had ever lived!
- The Eternal Huntress by Rayner Seelig 45
- This brilliant novel is concluded in this issue. . . . The story of a girl's flaming love set in the stir and confusion of New York days. Isabel is unique among heroines, and her career is marked by an amazing frankness. There are gorgeous high-lights in this modern chronicle.
- The Moon, If You Like—Verse by Mary Carolyn Davies 130
- The Primrose Path by Gertrude Pahlow 131
- A sparkling and delightful humor, the kind of wit that brings a chuckle. Miss Pahlow's story of the little girl who just couldn't be wicked is one of the brightest and merriest narratives of the year.
- Technique—a sketch by Louise de Salis 140
- Murder? by Marr Murray 141
- He was a brute, and a powerful one—remorseless, cruel, sardonic. . . . But there was a streak of soft stuff in him, and one day that streak was found out. He didn't last very long after that . . . but what happened to him makes Marr Murray's story a singular one.
- Shadowland by F. Hugh Herbert 148
- She had a hard struggle with life—there were so many ways—pleasant ways—to make mistakes, and so few ways of keeping straight. . . . Sometimes she despaired of winning the game. Somebody came along—and she met the biggest problem she'd ever had to face. . . .

VOL. 75

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$3

SEPTEMBER, 1924

NO. 1

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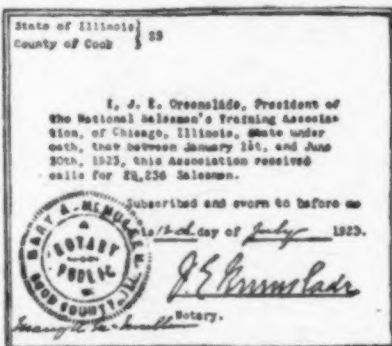
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v

Finding "The Fountain of Youth"

Along-Sought Secret, Vital to Happiness, Has Been Discovered.

By Walter S. Dean

*Alas! that spring should vanish with the rose!
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!*

—OMAR KHAYYAM.

A SECRET vital to human happiness has been discovered. An answer to an ancient problem which, sooner or later, affects the welfare of virtually every man and woman. As this problem undoubtedly will come to you eventually, if it has not come already, I urge you to read this article carefully. It may give you information of a value beyond all price.

This newly-revealed secret is not a new "philosophy" nor a financial formula. It is not a political panacea. It has to do with something of far greater moment to the individual—human happiness, especially in the later years of life. And there is nothing theoretical, imaginative or fantastic about it, because it comes from the coldly exact realms of the practical where values must be proved. It "works." And because it does work—most delightfully—it is one of the most important discoveries made in years. Thousands already bless it for having rescued them from disappointment and misery. Millions will rejoice because of it in years to come.

The peculiar value of this discovery is in its virtue for lifting the physical handicaps resulting from the premature waning of the vital forces of life, whether due to overwork, over-worry, sickness or the general over-expenditure of nervous energy in the strenuous living typical of the modern day. True happiness does not depend on wealth, position or fame. Primarily, it is a matter of health. Not the inefficient, "half-alive" condition which ordinarily passes as "health," but the abundant, vibrant, magnetic vitality of superb manhood and womanhood.

Unfortunately, this kind of health is rare. Our civilization, with its wear and tear, rapidly depletes recuperative capacity, and, in a physical sense, old age comes on when life should be at its prime.



But this is not a tragedy of our era alone. Ages ago a Persian poet, in the world's most melodious epic of pessimism, voiced humanity's immemorial complaint that "spring should vanish with the rose" and the song of summer too soon come to an end. And for centuries before Omar Khayyam wrote his immortal verse, science had searched—and in the centuries that have passed since then has continued to search, without halt, for the fabled "fountain of youth"—the means for renewing energy and extending the summer time of life.

Now, after many years of research, joyful reports from thousands show that lives clouded by the haze of too-early autumn have been illumined by the summer sun of health and joy; old age, in a sense being kept at bay, and the physical and mental vigor of former years again enjoyed in work and recreation. And the discovery which so adds to the joy of living is easily available to every one who feels the need of greater energy and vitality.

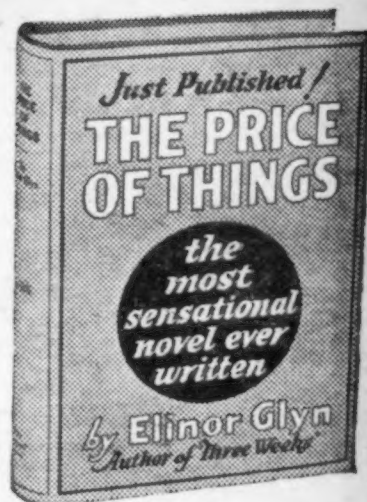
The discovery had its origin in famous European laboratories. Brought to America, it was developed into a product that has won the highest praise in thousands of cases, many of which had defied all other treatments. In scientific circles the discovery has been known and used for several years with extraordinarily gratifying appreciation for the success it has demonstrated. It is now put up in convenient tablet form, under the name of Korex compound, for distribution to the general public.

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"The Price of Things" thrillingly relates how, despite all shams and conventions, the terrific force of love will grow in leaps and bounds until, with a roar and a rush, it bursts all the floodgates of restraint. As the heroine sees this irresistible force: "Then I forgot honor and self-control, because in nature I find there is a stronger force than all these things, and that is the touch of the one we love."

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SMART SET

The Uniqueness of Roxelane

By Ellis O. Briggs

THE money I spent at the *Petit Champ* Garden Bar in Constantinople, night after night, was merely incidental. I came to watch the Arab girl dance and, having watched, I returned to my rooms in a highly explosive state which had no reference to the number of glasses of *douzico* I had stowed away while waiting for her act.

Seeing her, I had a wild impulse to leap to the stage and press her extraordinarily pliant body against my own, —to clutch with my hands those sleek soft shoulders, as mobile as white petals in the breeze,—to bury my face in the liquid of her dark perfumed hair. A Russian, in my combustible condition, would have snapped off three gills of *vodka*, sawed Roxelane's manager into stove lengths and decamped toward the steps with his onyx eyes glistening and the shrieking girl under his arm. A Frenchman would have bribed the same Levantine keeper and entertained the lady with *Cordon Rouge* and the tickle of his combed whiskers. But I couldn't do that. The Anglo and the Saxon corpuses forbade me.

I WAS sure that I appealed to Roxelane. I paid the scurrilous waiter enough in securing my table by the footlights to enable him to drain the Golden Horn with a garden hose and a bicycle pump. And on the sixth night that I appeared at the identical table, Roxelane smiled at me, from a distance of nine feet. From then on, every night, she smiled at me. The novelty did not wear off. I looked forward to the sensation as the crowning aesthetic achievement of each day; I experienced, under the potent gaze of Roxelane's amber eyes, the feeling of having a bit of ice rubbed the length of my spine, followed by the conviction that I had swallowed lighted gasoline.

Yes, Roxelane was unique; there was no question about it.

ONE EVENING her appearance was delayed by half an hour, increasing the size of my bill by two *Pernod* absinthe, mixed in the French fashion (now unhappily banned), a cup of muddy coffee, a thimble-full of *raki*, and several attempts to swallow at a gulp the evil

mixture the Greeks name *mastika*.

As soon as Roxelane stepped to the stage I sensed that something was wrong. It was not alone the droop of her shoulders as she stood in the wings, waiting her cue; nor was it the listless turn of her deep, sensuous lips as her head went back, her hair scraping the floor and her naked arms moving to the rhythm of Eastern music. She danced mechanically tonight and I caught her eyes turning again and again to the side of the stage where her manager waited. There was fear in her eyes.

She did not smile at me. . . .

Her manager was visible from my table. As he stood in the wings I could see there was something in his hand. Once more Roxelane danced. She was weary, panting, with pearly drops shining on forehead and breast and arms. She swayed at a chord which should have rendered her marble. A drunken Armenian at the rear of the hall giggled.

As Roxelane passed the wings I saw the hand of the manager rise. Something shot out from his wrist. It was the flick of a lash! The thong struck the Arab girl across the back! . . .

A minute and a half was all I required to reach Roxelane's room. The door was shut, but I plunged in with sufficient extra momentum to carry me half way across the Bosphorus had there been no wall blocking my progress. The knuckles of my fist struck the manager's ear in time to prevent another blow of his whip. He crumpled

from the ankles. Savagely I seized his whip and broke the stem into four or five pieces.

Roxelane was leaning against the back of a chair. Part of her meagre costume was ripped away and on her side I saw the red mark of the lash. She eyed me with a curious, passionate stare; the look of her who sees the mirage of an oasis after parching days on the desert. Her dark eyelids fluttered. She swayed forward, her hand reaching out for my hand; finding it, she lifted it to her moist lips. I felt the fragrance of henna, and of dried rose petals of Arabia. . . .

MY ARM supported the shoulder of Roxelane's Levantine manager as I applied to his mouth the neck of a bottle of brandy. The energy of forty-nine pairs of vicious wild zebras trickled down his throat—he opened his eyes and he gurgled.

I addressed him in French, in a voice carefully modulated and courteous. "There is my Turkish note for fifty *liras* on the table beside your *nargileh*. Do not, my dear sir, make the mistake of buying another whip. Go instead to the English shop on the *Grande Rue de Pera* and buy a shotgun."

I held up my thumb. The teeth in Roxelane's alluring and sensuous countenance had cut my thumb to the bone . . . the severed muscles were twitching.

Yes, Roxelane was unique; there was absolutely no question about it.



CHILDHOOD: the summer morning before the tornado struck you.



J Her first husband was killed in the war, and she married again . . . but she was to find out that death is not a final thing, so long as memory lives! . . . A vivid story by a great author.

The Borderline

By D. H. Lawrence

KATHERINE FARQUHAR was a handsome woman of forty, no longer slim, but attractive in her soft, full, feminine way. The French porters ran round her, getting a voluptuous pleasure from merely carrying her bags. And she gave them ridiculously high tips, because, in the first place, she had never really known the value of money, and secondly, she had a morbid fear of underpaying anyone, but particularly a man, who was eager to serve her.

It was really a joke to her, how eagerly these Frenchmen—all sorts of Frenchmen—ran round her and *Madamed* her. Their voluptuous obsequiousness! Because after all, she was Boche. Fifteen years of marriage to an Englishman—or rather to two Englishmen—had not altered her racially. Daughter of a German baron she was, and remained, in her own mind and body, although England had become her life-home. And surely she looked German, with her fresh complexion and her strong full figure. But like most people of the world, she was a mixture, with Russian blood and French blood also in her veins. And she had lived in one country and another, till she was somewhat indifferent to her surroundings. So that perhaps the Parisian men might be ex-

cused for running round her so eagerly, and getting a voluptuous pleasure from calling a taxi for her, or giving up a place in the omnibus to her, or carrying her bags, or holding the menu card before her. Nevertheless, it amused her. And she had to confess she liked them, these Parisians. They had their own kind of manliness, even if it wasn't an English sort; and if a woman looked pleasant and soft-fleshed, and a wee bit helpless, they were ardent and generous. Katherine understood so well that Frenchmen were rude to the dry, hard-seeming, competent Englishwoman or American. She sympathized with the Frenchman's point of view: too much obvious capacity to help herself is a disagreeable trait in a woman.

At the Gare de l'Est, of course, everybody was expected to be Boche, and it was almost a convention with the porters to assume a certain small-boyish superciliousness. Nevertheless, there was the same voluptuous scramble to escort Katherine Farquhar to her seat in the first class carriage. *Madame* was traveling alone.

SHE WAS going to Germany via Strasburg, meeting her sister in Baden-Baden. Philip, her husband, was in Germany collecting some sort of evidence for his newspaper. Kather-

ine felt a little weary of newspapers, and of the sort of "evidence" that is extracted out of nowhere to feed them. However, Philip was quite clever, he was a "little somebody" in the world.

Her world, she had realized, consisted almost entirely of "little sombodies." She was outside the spheres of the nobodies, always had been. And the Sombodies with a capital S were all safely dead. She knew enough of the world today to know that it is not going to put up with any great Somebody; but many little nobodies and a sufficient number of little sombodies. Which, after all, is as it should be, she felt. . . .

Sometimes she had vague misgivings.

Paris, for example, with its Louvre and its Luxembourg and its cathedral, seemed intended for Somebody. In a ghostly way, it called for some supreme Somebody. But all its little men, nobodies and sombodies, were as sparrows twittering for crumbs, and dropping their little droppings on the palace cornices.

To Katherine, Paris brought back again her first husband, Alan Anstruther, that red-haired fighting Celt, father of her two grown-up children. Alan had had a weird innate conviction that he was beyond ordinary judgment. Katherine could never quite see where it came in. To be the son of a Scottish baronet, and captain in a Highland regiment did not seem to her stupendous. As for Alan himself, he was handsome in uniform, with his kilt swinging and his blue eye glaring. Even stark-naked and without any trimmings, he had a bony, dauntless, overbearing manliness of his own. The one thing Katherine could *not quite* appreciate was his silent, indomitable assumption that he was actually first-born, a horn lord. He was a clever man, too, ready to assume that General This or Colonel That might really be his superior. Until he actually came into contact with General This or Colonel That. Whereupon his overweening blue eye arched in his bony

face, and a faint tinge of contempt infused itself into his homage.

Lordly or not, he wasn't much of a success in the worldly sense.

Katherine had loved him, and he had loved her; that was indisputable. But when it came to innate conviction of lordliness, it was a question which of them was worse. For she, in her amiable, queen-bee self thought that ultimately hers was the right to the last homage.

Alan had been too unyielding and haughty to say much. But sometimes he would stand and look at her in silent rage, wonder, and indignation. The wondering indignation had been *almost* too much for her. What did the man think he was?

He was one of the hard clever Scotchmen, with a philosophic tendency, but without sentimentality. His contempt of Nietzsche, whom she adored, was intolerable. Alan just asserted himself like a pillar of rock, and expected the tides of the modern world to recede around him. They didn't.

So he concerned himself with astronomy, gazing through a telescope and watching the worlds beyond worlds. Which seemed to give him relief. . . .

After ten years they had ceased to live together, passionate as they both were. They were too proud and unforgiving to yield to one another, and much too haughty to yield to any outsider.

ALAN HAD a friend, Philip, also a Scotchman, and a university friend. Philip, trained for the bar, had gone into journalism, and had made himself a name. He was a little black Highlander, of the insidious sort, clever, and *knowing*. This look of knowing in his dark eyes, and the feeling of secrecy that went with his dark little body, made him interesting to women. Another thing he could do was to give off a great sense of warmth and offering, like a dog when it loves you. He seemed to be able to do this at will. And Katherine, after feeling cool about him and rather despising him for years, at last

fell under the spell of the dark, insidious fellow.

"You!" she said to Alan, whose overweening masterfulness drove her wild. "You don't even know that a woman exists. And that's where Philip Farquhar is more than you are. He *does* know something of what a woman is."

"Bah! the little—" said Alan, using an obscene word of contempt.

Nevertheless, the friendship endured, kept up by Philip, who had an almost uncanny love for Alan. Alan was mostly indifferent. But he was used to Philip, and habit meant a great deal to him.

"Alan really is an amazing man!" Philip would say to Katherine. "He is the only real man, what I call a real man, that I have ever met."

"But why is he the only real man?" she asked. "Don't you call *yourself* a real man?"

"Oh, I—I'm different! My strength lies in giving in—and then recovering myself. I do let myself be swept away. But so far, I've always managed to get myself back again. Alan—" and Philip even had a half-reverential, half-envious way of uttering the word—"Alan *never* lets himself be swept away. And he's the only man I know who doesn't."

"Yah!" she said. "He is fooled by plenty of things. You can fool him through his vanity."

"No," said Philip. "Never, altogether. You *can't* deceive him right through. When a thing really touches Alan, it is tested once and for all. You know if it's false or not. He's the only man I ever met, who *can't* help being real."

"Ha!—you overrate his reality," said Katherine, rather scornfully.

And later, when Alan shrugged his shoulders with that mere, indifferent tolerance, at the mention of Philip, she got angry.

"You are a poor friend," she said.

"Friend!" he answered. "I never was Farquhar's friend! If he asserts that he's mine, that's his side of the

question. I never positively cared for the man. He's too much over the wrong side of the border for me."

"Then," she answered, "you've no business to let him *consider* he is your friend. You've no right to let him think so much of you. You should tell him you don't like him."

"I've told him a dozen times. He seems to enjoy it. It seems part of his game."

And he went away to his astronomy.

CAME THE WAR and the departure of Alan's regiment for France.

"There!" he said. "Now you have to pay the penalty of having married a soldier. You find him fighting your own people. So it is."

She was too much struck by this blow even to weep.

"Good-bye!" he said, kissing her gently, lingeringly. After all, he had been a husband to her.

And as he looked back at her, with the gentle, protective husband-knowledge in his blue eyes, and at the same time, that other quiet realization of destiny, her consciousness fluttered into incoherence. She only wanted to alter everything, to alter the past, to alter *all* the flow of history, the terrible flow of history. Secretly somewhere inside herself she felt that with her queen-bee love, and queen-bee will, she *could* divert the whole flow of history—nay, even reverse it.

But in the remote, realizing look that lay at the back of his eyes, back of all his changeless husband-care, she saw that it could never be so. That the whole of her womanly, motherly concentration could never put back the great flow of human destiny. That, as he said, only the cold strength of a man, accepting the destiny of destruction, could see the human flow through the chaos and beyond to a new outlet. But the chaos first, and the long rage of destruction.

For an instant her will broke. Almost her soul seemed broken. And then he was gone. And as soon as he

was gone, she recovered the core of her assurance.

Philip was a great consolation to her. He asserted that the war was monstrous, that it should never have been, and that men should refuse to consider it as anything but a colossal, disgraceful accident.

She, in her German soul, knew that it was no accident. It was inevitable, and even necessary. But Philip's attitude soothed her enormously, restored her to herself.

II

ALAN NEVER came back. In the spring of 1915 he was missing. She had never mourned for him. She had never really considered him dead. In a certain sense, she had triumphed. The Queen-bee had recovered her sway as queen of the earth: the woman, the mother, the female with the ear of corn in her hand, as against the man with the sword.

Philip had gone through the war as a journalist, always throwing his weight on the side of humanity, and human truth, and peace. He had been an inexpressible consolation. And in 1921 she had married him.

The thread of fate might be spun, it might even be measured out. But the hand of Lachesis had been stayed from cutting it through.

At first, it was wonderfully pleasant and restful and voluptuous, especially for a woman of thirty-eight, to be married to Philip. Katherine felt he caressed her senses, and soothed her, and gave her what she wanted. . . .

Then, gradually, a curious sense of degradation started in her spirit. She felt unsure, uncertain. It was almost like having a disease. Life became null and unreal to her, as it had never been before. She did not even struggle and suffer. In the numbness of her flesh she could feel no reactions. Everything was turning into mud.

Then again, she would recover, and enjoy herself wonderfully. And after a while, the suffocating sense of nullity

and degradation once more. Why, why, why did she feel degraded, in her secret soul? *Never*, of course, outwardly.

The memory of Allan came back into her. She still thought of him and his relentlessness with an arrested heart, but without the angry hostility she used to feel. A little awe of him, of his memory, stole back into her spirit. She resisted it. She was not used to feeling awe.

She realized, however, the difference between being married to a soldier, a ceaseless, born fighter, a sword not to be sheathed, and this other man, this cunning civilian, this subtle equivocator, this adjuster of the scales of truth.

Philip was cleverer than she was. He set her up, the queen-bee, the Mother, the Woman, the Female Judgment, and he served her with subtle, cunning homage. He put the scales, the Balance, in her hand. But also, cunningly, he blindfolded her, and manipulated the scales when she was sightless.

Dimly she realized all this. But only dimly, confusedly, because she was blindfolded. Philip had the subtle, fawning power that could keep her always blindfolded. . . .

Sometimes she gasped and gasped, from her oppressed lungs. And sometimes the bony, hard, masterful, but honest face of Alan would come back, and suddenly it would seem to her that she was all right again, that the strange voluptuous suffocation, which left her soul in mud, was gone, and she could breathe air of the open heavens once more. Even fighting air.

IT CAME to her on the boat crossing the Channel. Suddenly she seemed to feel Alan at her side again, as if Philip had never existed. As if Philip had never meant anything more to her than the shop-assistant measuring off her orders. And, escaping, as it were, by herself across the cold, wintry Channel, she suddenly deluded herself into feeling as if Philip had never existed, only Alan had ever been her husband. . . . He was her husband still. . . . And she was going to meet him. . . .

This gave her her blitheness in Paris, and made the Frenchmen so nice to her. For the Latins love to feel a woman is really enveloped in the spell of some man. Beyond all race, is the problem of man and woman. . . .

Katherine now sat dimly, vaguely excited and almost happy, in the railway carriage on the Est railroad. It was like the old days when she was going home to Germany. Or even more, like the old days when she was coming back to Alan. Because in the past when he was her husband, feel as she might toward him, she could never get over the sensation that the wheels of the railway-carriage had wings, when they were taking her back to him. Even when she knew that he was going to be awful to her, hard and relentless and destructive, still the motion went on wings.

Whereas toward Philip she moved with a strange, disintegrating reluctance. She decided not to think of him.

III

AS SHE LOOKED unseeing out of the carriage window, suddenly, with a jolt, the wintry landscape realized itself in her consciousness. The flat, grey, wintry landscape, ploughed fields of greyish earth that looked as if they were compound of the clay of dead men. Pallid, stark, thin trees stood like wire beside straight, abstract roads. A ruined farm between a few more wire trees. And a dismal village filed past, with smashed houses like rotten teeth between the straight rows of the village street.

With sudden horror she realized that she must be in the Marne country, the ghastly Marne country, century after century digging the corpses of frustrated men into its soil! The border country, where the Latin races and the Germanic neutralize one another into horrid ash. . . .

Perhaps even the corpse of her own man among that grey clay. . . .

It was too much for her. She sat

ashy herself with horror, wanting to escape.

"If I had only known," she said, "if only I had known, I would have gone by Basle. . . ."

The train drew up at Soissons: name ghastly to her. She simply tried to make herself unreceptive to everything. And mercifully luncheon was served. She went down to the restaurant car, and sat opposite to a little French Officer in horizon-blue uniform, who suggested anything but war. He looked so naïve, rather childlike and nice, with the certain innocence that so many French people preserve under their so-called wickedness, that she felt really relieved. He bowed to her with an odd, shy little bow when she returned him his half-bottle of red wine, which had slowly jiggled its way the length of the table, owing to the motion of the train. How nice he was! And how he would give himself to a woman, if she would only find real pleasure in the male that he was.

Nevertheless, she herself felt very remote from this business of male and female, and giving and taking.

AFTER LUNCHEON, in the heat of the train and the flush of her half-bottle of white wine, she went to sleep again, her feet grilling uncomfortably on the iron plate of the carriage floor. And as she slept, life as she had known it seemed all to turn artificial to her, the sunshine of the world an artificial light, with smoke above, like the light of torches, and things artificially growing, in a night that was lit up artificially with such intensity that it gave the illusion of day. It had been an illusion, her life-day, as a ballroom evening is an illusion. Her love and her emotions, her very panic of love, had been an illusion. She realized how love had become panic-stricken inside her, during the war.

And now even this panic of love was an illusion. She had run to Philip to be saved. And now, both her panic love and Philip's salvation were an illusion!

What remained, then? Even panic-stricken love, the intensest thing, perhaps, she had ever felt, was only an illusion. What was left? The grey shadows of death?

When she looked out again, it was growing dark, and they were at Nancy. She used to know this country as a girl. At half-past seven she was in Strasbourg, where she must stay the night, as there was no train over the Rhine till morning.

The porter, a blond, hefty fellow, addressed her at once in Alsatian German. He insisted on escorting her safely to her hotel—a German hotel—keeping guard over her like an appointed sentinel, very faithful and competent, so different from Frenchmen.

IT WAS a cold, wintry night, but she wanted to go out after dinner, to see the Cathedral. She remembered it all so well, in that other life.

The wind blew icily in the street. The town seemed empty, as if its spirit had left it. The few squat, hefty foot-passengers were all talking the harsh, Alsatian German. Shop signs were in French, often with a little concession to German underneath. And the shops were full of goods, glutted with goods from the once German factories of Mulhausen and other cities.

She crossed the night-dark river, where the washhouses of the washer-women were anchored along the stream, a few odd women still kneeling over the water's edge, in the dim electric light, rinsing their clothes in the grim cold water. In the big square, the icy wind was blowing, and the place seemed a desert. A city once more conquered.

After all she could not remember her way to the Cathedral. She saw a French policeman in his blue cape and peaked cap, looking a lonely, vulnerable, silky specimen in this harsh Alsatian city. Crossing over to him, she asked him in French where was the Cathedral.

He pointed out to her the first turning on the left. He did not seem hostile: nobody seemed really hostile. Only

the great frozen weariness of winter in a conquered city, on a weary, everlasting borderline.

And the Frenchman seemed far more weary, and also, more sensitive, than the crude Alsations. . . .

SHE REMEMBERED the little street, the old, overhanging houses with black timbers and high gables. And like a great ghost, a reddish flush in its darkness, the uncanny Cathedral breasting the oncomer, standing gigantic, looking down in darkness out of darkness, on the pigmy humanness of the city. It was built of reddish stone, that had a flush in the night, like dark flesh. And vast, an incomprehensibly tall, strange thing, it looked down out of the night. The great rose window poised high seemed like a breast of the vast thing, and prisms and needles of stone shot up, as if it were plumage, dimly, half-visible in heaven.

There it was, in the upper darkness of the ponderous winter night, like a menace. She remembered, her spirit used in the past to soar aloft with it. But now, looming with a faint rust of blood out of the upper black heavens, the thing stood suspended, looking down with vast, demonish menace, calm and implacable.

Mystery and dim, ancient fear came over the woman's soul. The Cathedral looked so strange and demonish-beathen. And an ancient, indomitable blood seemed to stir in it. It stood there like some vast silent beast with teeth of stone, waiting and wondering when to stoop against this pallid humanity.

And dimly she realized that behind all the ashy pallor and sulphur of our civilization lurks the great blood-creature waiting, implacable and eternal, ready at last to crush our white brittleness and let the shadowy blood move erect once more in a new, implacable pride and strength. Even out of the lower heavens looms the great blood-dusky Thing, blotting out the Cross it was supposed to exalt.

The scroll of the night sky seemed

to roll back, showing a huge, blood-dusky presence looming enormous, stooping looking down, awaiting its moment. . . .

AS SHE turned to go away, to move away from the closed wings of the Minster, she noticed a man standing on the pavement, in the direction of the post-office which functions obscurely in the Cathedral Square. Immediately she knew that that man, standing dark and motionless, was Alan! He was alone, motionless, remote. . . .

He did not move toward her. She hesitated, then went in his direction, as if going to the post-office. He stood perfectly motionless, and her heart died as she drew near. Then, as she passed, he turned suddenly, looking down on her.

It was he, though she could hardly see his face, it was so dark, with a dusky glow in the shadow.

"Alan!" she said.

He did not speak, but laid his hand detainingly on her arm, as he used in the early days, with strange, silent authority. And turning her with a faint pressure on her arm, he went along with her, leisurely, through the main street of the city, under the arcade where the shops were still lighted up.

She glanced at his face; it seemed much more dusky, and duskily ruddy, than she had known him. He was a stranger; and yet it was he, no other. He said nothing at all. But that was also in keeping. His mouth was closed, his watchful eyes seemed changeless, and there was a shadow of silence around him, impenetrable, but not cold. Rather aloof and gentle, like the silence that surrounds a wild animal.

She knew that she was walking with his spirit. But that even did not trouble her. It seemed natural. And there came over her again the feeling she had forgotten, the restful, thoughtless pleasure of a woman who moves in the aura of the man to whom she belongs. As a young woman, she had had this unremarkable, yet very precious, feeling when she was with her husband. It

had been a full contentment; and perhaps the fulness of it had made her unconscious of it. Later, it seemed to her she had almost wilfully destroyed it, this soft flow of contentment which she, a woman, had from him as a man.

Now, afterwards, she realized it. And as she walked at his side through the conquered city, she knew that it was the one enduring thing a woman can have, the intangible soft flood of contentment that carries her along at the side of the man she is married to. It is her perfection and her highest attainment.

Now, in the afterwards, she knew it. Now the strife was gone. And dimly she wondered why, why, why she had ever fought against it. No matter what the man does or is, as a person, if a woman can move at his side in this dim, full flood of contentment, she has the highest of him, and her scratching efforts at getting more than this are her ignominious efforts at self-nullity.

Now she knew and she submitted. Now that she was walking with a man who came from the halls of death, to her, for her relief. The strong, silent kindness of him toward her, even now, was able to wipe out the ashy, nervous horror of the world from her body. She went at his side still and released, like one newly unbound, walking in the dimness of her own contentment.

At the bridge-head he came to a standstill, and drew his hand from her arm. She knew he was going to leave her. But he looked at her from under his peaked cap, darkly but kindly, and he waved his hand with a slight, kindly gesture of farewell and of promise, as if in the farewell he promised never to leave her, never to let the kindness go out in his heart, to let it stay hers always.

SHE HURRIED over the bridge with tears running down her cheeks, and on to her hotel. Hastily she climbed to her room. And as she undressed she avoided the sight of her own face in the mirror. She must not rupture the spell of his presence. . . .

Now, in the afterwards, she realized *how* careful she must be, not to break the mystery that enveloped her. Now that she knew he had come back to her from the dead she was aware how precious and how fragile the coming was. He had come back with his heart dark and kind, wanting her even in the afterwards. And not in any sense must she go against him. The warm, powerful, silent ghost had come back to her. It was he. She must not even try to think about him definitely, not try to realize him or to understand. Only in her own woman's soul could she silently ponder him, darkly, and know him present in her, without ever staring at him or trying to find him out. Once she tried to lay hands on him, to *have* him, to *realize* him, he would be gone forever, and gone forever this last precious flood of her woman's peace.

"Ah, no!" she said to herself. "If he leaves his peace with me, I must ask no questions whatsoever."

And she repented, silently, of the way she had questioned and demanded answers, in the past. What were the answers, when she had got them? Terrible ash in the mouth.

She now knew the supreme modern terror of a world all ashy and nerve-dead. If a man could come back out of death to save her from this, she would not ask questions of him, but be humble and beyond tears grateful.

IV

IN THE MORNING, she went out into the icy wind, under the grey sky, to see if he would be there again. Not that she *needed* him: his presence was still about her. But he might be waiting.

The town was stony and cold. The people looked pale, chilled through, and doomed in some way. Very far from her they were. She felt a sort of pity for them, but knew she could do nothing, nothing in time or eternity. And they looked at her, and looked quickly away again, as if they were uneasy in themselves.

The Cathedral reared its great reddish grey façade in the stark light: but it did not loom as in the night. The cathedral square was hard and cold. Inside, the church was cold and repellent, in spite of the glow of stained glass. And he was nowhere to be found.

So she hastened away to her hotel and to the station, to catch the 10:30 train into Germany.

It was a lonely, dismal train, with a few forlorn souls waiting to cross the Rhine. Her Alsatian porter looked after her with the same dogged care as before. She got into the first-class carriage that was going through to Prague—she was the only passenger traveling first. A real French porter, in blouse and moustache and swagger, tried to say something a bit jeering to her, in his few words of German. But she only looked at him, and he subsided. He didn't really want to be rude. There was a certain hopelessness even about that.

The train crept slowly, disheartened, out of town. She saw the weird, humped-up creature of the Cathedral in the distance, pointing its one finger above the city. Why, oh, why, had the old Germanic races put it there, like that! . . .

Slowly the country disintegrated into the Rhine flats and marshes, the canals, the willow trees, the overflow streams, the wet places frozen but not flooded. Weary the place all seemed. And old Father Rhine flowing in greenish volume, implacable, separating the races now weary of race struggle, but locked in the toils as in the coils of a great snake, unable to escape. Cold, full, green, and utterly disheartening, the river came along under the wintry sky, passing beneath the bridge of iron.

There was a long wait in Kehl, where the German officials and the French observed a numb, dreary kind of neutrality. Passport and customs examination was soon over. But the train waited and waited, as if unable to get away from that point of pure negation, where the two races neutralized one another,

and no polarity was felt, no life—no principle dominated.

Katherine Farquhar just sat still, in the suspended silence of her husband's return. She heeded neither French nor German, spoke one language or the other at need, hardly knowing. She waited, while the hot train steamed and hissed, arrested at the perfect neutral point of the new borderline, just across the Rhine.

And at last a little sun came out, and the train silently drew away, nervously, from the neutrality.

In the great flat fields of the Rhine plain, the shallow flood-water was frozen, the furrows ran straight toward nowhere; the air seemed frozen, too. But the earth felt strong and barbaric; it seemed to vibrate, with its straight furrows, in a deep, savage undertone. There was the frozen, savage thrill in the air also, something wild and unsubdued, pre-Roman.

This part of the Rhine valley, even on the right bank, in Germany, was occupied by the French. Hence the curious vacancy, the suspense, as if no men lived there, but some spirit was watching, watching over the vast, empty, straight-furrowed fields and the water-meadows. Stillness, emptiness, suspense, and a sense of something still impending.

A long wait in the station of Appenweier, on the main line of the Right-bank railway. The station was empty. Katherine remembered its excited, thrilling bustle in pre-war days.

"Yes," said the German guard to the Station-master, "What do they hurry us out of Strasburg for, if they are only going to keep us so long here?"

The heavy Badisch German! The sense of resentful impotence in the Germans! Katherine smiled to herself. She realized that here the train left the occupied territory.

At last they set off, northward, free for the moment, in Germany. It was the land beyond the Rhine, Germany of the pine forests. The very earth seemed strong and unsubdued, bristling with a

few reeds and bushes, like savage hair. There was the same silence, and waiting, and the old, barbaric undertone of the white-skinned north, under the waning civilization. The audible overtone of our civilization seemed to be wearing thin, the old, low pine-forest hum and roar of the ancient north seemed to be sounding through. At least, in Katherine's inner ear.

And there were the ponderous hills of the Black Forest, heaped and waiting sullenly, as if guarding the inner Germany. Black round hills, black with forest, save where white snow-patches of field had been cut out. Black and white, waiting there in the near distance, in sullen guard.

She knew the country so well. But not in this present mood: the emptiness, the sullenness, the heavy, recoiled waiting.

Steinbach! Then she was nearly there! She would have to change in Oos, for Baden-Baden, her destination. Probably Philip would be there to meet her in Oos; he would have come down from Heidelberg.

Yes, there he was! And at once she thought he looked ill, yellowish. His figure hollow and defeated!

"Aren't you well?" she asked, as she stepped out of the train onto the empty station.

"I'm so frightfully cold!" he said "I can't get warm."

"And the train was so hot!" she said.

At last a porter came to carry her bags across to the little connecting-train.

"How are you?" he said, looking at her with a certain pinched look in his face, and fear in his eyes.

"All right! It all feels very queer," she said.

"I don't know how it is," he said, "but Germany freezes my inside, and does something to my chest."

"We needn't stay long," she said easily.

He was watching the bright look in her face. And she was thinking how queer and *chétif* he looked! Extraor-

dinary! As she looked at him, she felt, for the first time, with curious clarity, that it was humiliating to be married to him, even in name. She was humiliated even by the fact that her name was Katherine Farquhar. Yet she used to think it a nice name!

"Just think of me married to that little man!" she thought to herself. "Think of my having his name!"

It didn't fit. She thought of her own name: Katherine von Todtnau; or of her married name: Katherine Anstruther. The first seemed most fitting. But the second was her second nature. The third, Katherine Farquhar, wasn't her at all.

"Have you seen Marianne?" she asked.

"Oh, yes!"

He was very brief! What was the matter with him?

"You'll have to be careful, with your cold," she said politely.

"I *am* careful!" he cried petulantly.

MARIANNE, her sister, was at the station, and in two minutes they were rattling away in German, and laughing and crying and exploding with laughter again, Philip quite ignored. In these days of frozen economy there was no taxi. A porter would wheel up the luggage on a trolley, the new arrivals walked to their little hotel, through the half-deserted town.

"But the little one is quite nice!" said Marianne deprecatingly.

"Isn't he!" cried Katherine, in the same tone.

And both sisters stood still and laughed, in the middle of the street. "The little one" was Philip.

"The other was more a man," said Marianne. "But I'm sure this one is easier. *The little one!* Yes, he *should* be easier," and she laughed in her mocking way.

"The stand-up-mannikin!" said Katherine, referring to those little toy men weighted at the base with lead, that always stand up again.

"Yes! Yes!" cried Marianne. "I'm sure he *always* comes up again!"

Prumm!" She made a gesture of knocking him over. "And there he rises once more!" She slowly raised her hand, as if the mannikin were elevating himself.

The two sisters stood in the street, laughing consumedly.

Marianne also had lost her husband in the war. But she seemed only more reckless and ruthless.

"Ah, Katy!" she said after dinner. "You are always such a good child! But you are different. Harder! No, you are not the same good Katy, the same kind Katy. You are no longer kind."

"And you?" said Katy.

"Ah, me! I don't matter. I watch what the end will be."

Marianne was six years older than Katherine, and she had now ceased to struggle for anything at all. She was a woman who had lived her life. So at last, life seemed endlessly quaint and amusing to her. She accepted everything, wondering over the powerful primitiveness of it all, at the root-pulse.

"I don't care any more at all what people do or don't do," she said. "Life is a great big tree, and the dead leaves fall. But very wonderful is the pulse in the roots! so strong, and so pitiless."

It was as if she found a final relief in the radical pitilessness of the Tree of Life.

Philip was very unhappy in this atmosphere. At the core of him a Scotch sentimentalist, he had calculated, very cannily, that the emotional, sentimental values would hold good as long as he lived: which was long enough for him. The old male pride and power were doomed. They had finally fallen in the war. Alan with them. But the emotional, sentimental values still held good.

Only not here in Germany. Here the very emotions had become exhausted. "Give us pitilessness. Give us the Tree of Life in winter, dehumanized and ruthless." So everything seemed to say. And it was too much for him.

HE wanted to be soft and sweet and loving, at evening, to Katherine. But there came Marianne's hollow, reckless laugh at the door, he was frustrated. And:

"Ach! Is it possible that anybody forty years old should still be in love! Ach! I had thought it impossible any more: after the war! Even a little indecent, shall I say!" laughed Marianne, seeing the frustrated languishing look on his face.

"If *love* isn't left, what is?" he said, petulant.

"Ach! I don't know! Really I don't. Can't you tell me?" she asked, with a weird naïveté of the *afterwards*.

He gathered himself together, the little stand-up mannikin, waiting till Marianne was gone and he could be softly alone with Katherine.

When the two were alone, he said:

"I'm most frightfully glad you've come, Kathy. I could hardly have held out another day without you. I feel you're the only thing on earth that remains real."

"You don't seem very real to me," she said.

"I'm not real! I'm *not!*—not when I'm alone. But when I am with you, I am the most real man alive. I know it."

He asserted this with vehemence and a weird, personal sort of passion that used to thrill her, but now repelled her.

"Why should you need me?" she said. "I am real without you."

She was thinking of Alan.

This was a blow to Philip. He considered for a moment. Then he said:

"Yes! You are! You are always real. But that's because you are a woman. A man without a woman *can't* be real."

He twisted his face and shook his hand with a sort of false vehemence. She looked at him and was repelled. After all, Alan could wander alone in the lonely places of the dead, and still be the ultimate real thing, to her.

She had given her allegiance elsewhere. Strange, how unspeakably cold she felt towards this little equivocal civilian.

"Don't let us talk tonight," she said. "I am *so* sleepy. I want to go to sleep this very minute. You don't mind, do you? Goodnight!"

She went to her room, with the green glazed stove. Outside, she could see the trees of the *seufzer Allee*, and the intense winter night. Curiously dark and wolfish the nights came on, with the little town obscurely lighted, for economy's sake, and no tram-cars running, for economy's sake, and the whole place, strangely, slipping back from our civilization, people moving in the dark like in a barbarian village, with the thrill of fear and menace in the wolfish air.

She slept soundly, none the less. But the raw air scraped her chest.

V

IN the morning, Philip was looking yellower, and coughing a good deal. She urged him to stay in bed. She wanted, really, to be free of him. And she also wanted him to be safe, too. He insisted, however, on staying about.

She could tell he had something on his mind. At last it came out.

"Do you dream much, here?" he said.

"I think I did dream," she said. "But I can't remember what about."

"I dream terribly," he said.

"What sort of dreams?"

"All sorts!" He gave a rueful laugh. "But nearly always about Alan." He glanced at her quickly, to see how she took it. She gave no sign.

"And what about him?" she said calmly.

"Oh!" He gave a desperate little gesture. "Why last night I dreamed that I woke up, and someone was lying on my bed, *outside* the bed-clothes. I thought at first it was you, so I wanted to speak to you. But I couldn't. Then I knew it was Alan, lying there in the cold. And he was terribly heavy. He was so heavy I couldn't move, because the bedclothes—you know I don't have that bolster thing—they were so tight on me, I could hardly breathe, they were like tight lead round me. It was

so awful, they were like a lead coffin-shell. And he was lying outside with that terrible weight. When I woke at last, I thought I *was* dead."

"It's because you've got a cold on your chest," she said. "Why won't you stay in bed and see a doctor!"

"I don't *want* a doctor," he said.

"You're so obstinate! At least you should drink the waters here. They'd be good for you."

DURING the day, she walked in the woods with Marianne. It was sunny, and there was thin snow. But the cold in the air was heavy, stony, unbreakable, and the woods seemed black, black. In a hollow open space, like a bowl, were little tortured bare vines. Never had she seen the pale vine-stocks look so tortured. And the black trees seemed to grow out of unutterably cold depths, and they seemed to be drinking away what warmth of life there was, while the vines in the clearing writhed with cold as leaves writhe in a fire.

After sunset, before dinner-time, she wanted to go to drink the hot waters from the spring at the big bath-hall, under the New Castle. Philip insisted on going with her, though she urged him to stay indoors. They went down the dark hill, and between the dark buildings of reddish stone, like the stone of Strasburg Cathedral. . . .

At the obscure fountain in the alcove of the courtyard a little group of people were waiting, dark and silent, like dark spirits round a source of steam. Some had come to drink. Some had come for a pail of hot water. Some had come merely to warm their fingers and get something hot inside them. Some had come furtively, with hot-water bottles, to warm their icy beds a little. Everybody was bed-rock poor, and silent; but well-clad, respectable, unbeaten.

Katherine and Philip waited a while. Then, in a far corner of the dark rocky grotto, where the fountain of hot water came out of the wall, Katherine saw Alan standing. He was standing as if waiting his turn to drink, behind the

other people. Philip apparently did not see him.

She pressed forward in the silent, sombre group of people, and held her glass under the tap, above the pail which a man was filling. The hot water ran over her fingers, gratefully. She rinsed her glass down the fountain bowl.

"Na!" said the man of the pail, in his rough but reckless, good-humored Badisch: "Throw it in the bucket. It's only wash-water."

She laughed, and lifted her pocket-glass, to drink. It was something of an ordeal among the group of silent people, there in the almost dark. There was a feeble lamp outside in the courtyard; inside the grotto was deep shadow.

Nevertheless, Alan was watching her, and she drank to him, in the hot, queer, hellish-tasting water. She drank a second small glassful. Then she filled the glass again, in front of all the waiting people, and handed it to Philip.

She did not look at Alan, but away into the courtyard, where more people were approaching, and where the steam of the springs rose from the grating in the ground, ghostly on the night air.

Philip drew back a little to drink. But at the first mouthful he choked, and began to cough. He coughed and coughed, in a convulsed spasm as if choking. She went to him anxiously. And then she saw that Alan also had come forward, and stood beside her, behind the coughing little Philip.

"What is it?" she said to the coughing man. "Did some of the water go the wrong way?"

He shook his head, but could not answer. At length, exhausted but quiet, he handed her the glass, and they moved away from the silent group of watchful, dark people.

And Alan was walking on her other side, holding her hand!

WHEN they came into the hall of the hotel, she saw with horror that there was a red smear of blood on Philip's chin, and red blotches on his overcoat.

"What have you done?" she cried.

He looked down at his breast, then up at her with haunted eyes. Fear, an agony and a horror of fear in his face. He went ghastly pale. Thinking he would swoon, she put her arm round him. But she felt someone silently but firmly and with strange, cold power pulling her arm away. She knew it was Alan.

The hotel-porter helped Philip up to his room, and she assisted her husband to undress and get to bed. But each time her hand touched the sick man's body, to sustain him, she felt it drawn silently, coldly, powerfully away, with complete relentlessness.

The doctor came and made his examination. He said it was not serious: only the rupture of a superficial blood-vessel. The patient must lie quite still and warm, and take light food. Avoid all excitement or agitation.

Philip's face had a haunted, martyred, guilty look. She soothed him as much as possible, but dared hardly touch him.

"Won't you sleep with me tonight, in case I dream?" he said to her, with big, excruciating eyes full of fear.

"You'll be better alone," she said softly. "You'll be better alone. I'll tuck you up warm, and sit with you a while. Keep yourself all covered up!"

She tucked him close, and sat by the bed. On the other side of the bed sat Alan, bare-headed, with his silent, expressionless, reddish face. The closed line of his lips, under the small reddish moustache, never changed, and he kept his eyelids half lowered. But there was a wonderful changeless dignity in his pose, as if he could sit thus, silent, and waiting, through the centuries. And through the warm air of the room he radiated this strange, stony coldness, that seemed heavy as the hand of death. It did not hurt Katherine. But Philip's face seemed chilled and bluish.

Katherine went to her room, when the sick man slept. Alan did not follow her. And she did not question. It was for the two men to work out destiny between them.

IN the night, towards morning, she heard a hoarse, horrible cry. She ran to Philip's room. He was sitting up in bed, blood running down his chin, his face livid, and his eyes rolling delirious.

"What is it?" she said in panic.

"He lay on top of me!" cried Philip, rolling his eyes inwards in horror. "He lay on top of me, and turned my heart cold, and burst my blood-vessel in my chest."

Katherine stood petrified. There was blood all over the sheets. She rang the bell violently. Across the bed stood Alan, looking at her with his unmoving blue eyes, just watching her. She could feel the strange stone-coldness of his presence touching even her heart. And she looked back at him humbly, she knew he had power over her, too. That strange, cold, stoney touch on her heart!

The servants came, and the doctor. And Alan went away. Philip was washed and changed, and went peacefully to sleep, looking like a corpse.

VI

THE day passed slowly. Alan did not appear. Even now, Katherine wanted him to come. Awful though he was, she wanted him to be there, to give her her surety, even though it was only the surety of dread; and her contentment, though it were the contentment of death.

At night she had a sofa-bed brought for her into Philip's room. He seemed quieter, better. She had not left him all day. And Alan had not appeared. At half-past nine, Philip sleeping quietly, she too lay down to sleep.

She woke in the night feeling the same stone coldness in the air. Had the stove gone out? Then she heard Philip's whispering call of terror: "*Katherine! Katherine!*" She went over quickly, and slipped into his bed, putting her arms round him. He was shuddering, and stony cold. She drew him to her.

But immediately two hands cold and

strong as iron seized her arms and pulled them away. She was pushed out of the bed, and pushed onto the floor of the bedroom. For an instant, the rage came into her heart, she wanted to get up and fight for the dying man. But a greater power, the knowledge of the uselessness and the fatal dishonorableness of her womanly interference made her desist. She lay for a time helpless and powerless on the floor, in her nightdress.

Then she felt herself lifted. In the dimness of coming dawn, she knew it was Alan. She could see the breast of his uniform—the old uniform she had known long before the war. And his face bending over her, cool and fresh.

He was still cold. But the stoniness had gone out of him, she did not mind this coldness. He pressed her firm hand hard to his own hard body. He was hard and cold like a tree, and alive. And the prickling of his moustache was the cold prickling of fir-needles.

He held her fast and hard, and seemed to possess her through every pore of her body. Not now the old, procreative way of possession. He held her fast, and possessed her through every pore in her body. Then he laid her on her own bed, to sleep.

When she awoke, the sun was shining, and Philip lay dead in a pool of blood. . . .

SOMEHOW she did not mind. She was only thinking of Alan. After all, she belonged to the man who could keep her. To the only man who knew at all how to keep her, and could only possess her through all the pores of her body, so that there was no recoil from him. Not just through one act, one function holding her. But as a cloud holds a shower.

The men that were just functional men: let them pass and perish. She wanted her contentment like life itself, through every pore, through every bit of her. The man who could hold her as the wind held her, as the air held her, all surrounded. The man whose aura

permeated into every vein, through all her pores, as the scent of a pine tree when one stands beneath it. A man, not like a faun or a satyr or an angel or a demon, but like the Tree of Life itself, implacable and unquestionable and permeating, voiceless, abiding.

In the afternoon she went to walk by herself. She climbed uphill, steep, past the New Castle, and up through the pine woods, climbing upwards to the Old Castle. There it stood, among dense trees, its old, rose-red stone walls broken and silent. Two men, queer, wild ruffians with bundles on their backs, stood in the broken roofless hall, looking round.

"Yes," the elder one, with the round beard, was saying. "There are no more Dukes of Baden, and Counts and Barons and peers of the realm are as much in ruin as this place. Soon we shall be all alike, *Lumpen*, tramps."

"Also no more Ladies," said the younger one, in a lower voice. "Every tramp can have his lady."

Katherine heard him, with a pang of fear. Knowing the castle, she climbed the stairs and round the balustrade above the great hall, looking out far over the country. The sun was sinking. The Rhine was a dim magnesium ribbon, away on the plain. Across was the Russian Chapel; below, on the left, the town, and the Lichtenthal. No more gamblers, no more cosmopolitan play. Evening and the dark round hills going lonely, snow on the Merkur hill.

MERCURY! Hermes! The messenger! Even as she thought it, standing there on the wall, Alan came along and stood beside her, and she felt at ease. The two men down below were looking up at her. They watched in silence, not knowing the way up. They were in the cold shadow of the hall below. A little, lingering sun, reddish, caught her where she was, above.

Again, for the last time, she looked over the land: the sun sinking below the Rhine, the hills of Germany this side, and the frozen stillness of the winter afternoon. "Yes, let us go," she heard

the elder man's voice. "We are hardly men or women any more. We are more like the men and women who have drunk in this hall, living after our day."

"Only we eat and drink still, and the men want the women still."

"No! No! A man forgets when he sees the ghost and the woman together."

The two tramps turned and departed, heavy-shod, up the hill. . . .

Katherine felt Alan's touch on her arm, and she climbed down from the old, broken castle. He led her through the woods, past the red rocks. The sun

had sunk, the trees were blue. He lingered against under a great pine tree, in the shadow. And again, as he pressed her fast, and pressed his cold face against her, it was as if the wood of the tree itself were growing round her, the hard live wood compressing and almost devouring her, the sharp needles brushing her face, the limbs of the living tree enveloping her, crushing her in the last, final ecstasy of submission, squeezing from her the last drop of her passion, like the cold white berries of the mistletoe on the Tree of Life.



Around the Punch Bowl

(At a débutante dance)

By Charles G. Shaw

"D O you think it's got any kick to it?"

"Wonder if there's anything stronger."

"Got a flask on you?"

"Which one's the hostess?"

"I know a place around the corner where they sell it."

"Willie's passed out in the coat-room."

"So far, I've only fallen down twice."

"Who's giving this dance, anyway?"

"Nev' seen susch dry party in m' life."



WHEN she would examine the state of her soul, a woman has only to gaze into a mirror.



[T is a wise woman that knows which man broke her heart.



High-Low Jack and the Dame

By Art Smith

SWINGING from his left toe, the steeplejack lit a cigarette, tossed the match to the pavement two hundred feet below, and opened the morning paper. A wayward gull floated by his ear as he skimmed over the political news and devoured the daily yarn of suicide and the eternal triangle.

"Poor dumbbells," he commented with disdain. "It ain't enough for 'em to blow their roll on some dame. They have to blow their brains out too."

With an easy, professional flip, he extricated his left toe and moored himself with his suspenders. A smile of self-approval came over his face as he reflected how neatly he slipped out of every affair of his past.

"They won't get this bird," he chuckled. "Not on your life. You don't catch me puttin' my life in danger for the swellest fluff on the avenue."

He had refreshed himself with the baseball news, and was lackadaisically regarding the tiny specks of humanity that zig-zagged over the floor of the canyon between him and the next sky-scraper, when a faint whistle told him the day's work was done. Disengaging himself nonchalantly from his perch, he slid down a rope, and strode, a few seconds later, toward his streetcar.

As the cynical jack of the needle towers neared the corner, his nostrils became subtly aware of something exotic in the atmosphere. His ears caught the intrigue of rustling silk, and quite suddenly before his eyes appeared the vision his senses had detected in the offing. Was that radiant smile for him? He felt a cold quiver creep up his spine and become a hot pulsing in his neck. The truth came upon him with a crash as she nodded her ravishing head, unquestionably at him. She was waiting for him!

Now totally aflame, the mechanic of the clouds quickened his pace, plunged into a danger sign, and disappeared into a black manhole.

"And to think," muttered his radiant decoy, shaking a box of coins at the passersby, "I was going to sell him a tag."



Of Roses

By Mary Carolyn Davies

I LOVE love!
And so I take
With quick hands
The sure heartbreak

That comes with love.
A thorn may sting:
But isn't a rose
A pretty thing?

She was the snappiest cabaret girl on Broadway . . . and she fell for the breezy lad from Kansas City—the way they all do when they think about a husband, and a nice little home in the country, and a flock of kiddies . . .

Myself for Doris

By Mabel Dunham Thayer

TROUBLE usually starts with a triangle.

But this is the most exciting triangle of all—its base resting firmly on Forty-Second Street, and its peak pointing up into the Fifties, the cabaret district, par excellence.

In its sharp confines crook and saint rub elbows unheedingly, unmindful of the existence of the other. For Broadway, like theology, is mostly what one believes it to be.

In the centre of the triangle, at this particular time, was Doris, all pink and gold and dimples, who certainly knew her way about. And close to her, as close as he could get, was Craig Semple, fresh from Kansas City, who had not learned his way at all. Then sitting back, and looking on, was David Carew, who helped provide the byways that made such knowledge necessary and profitable.

David and Craig were each occupying tables at the Crystal Palace for the tenth consecutive night. And Doris was the innocent cause. At least she was the cause. But then, it was the smart thing this season to think well of Doris. It was the reason for the crowd pushing against the entrance ropes of the Crystal Palace for admittance. Doris' dancing! Doris' frocks! And the way she wore her hair. Every flapper in New York copied them, not to mention the visitors from out of town.

Doris snapped into her song and danc-

ing in a way that made you feel like getting up alongside her and doing the thing yourself. She dared you. Blue eyes flashing invitation and dimples taunting:

"Come along folks, let's go!" until it was hard to sit still, or be tired or bored, or anything much except a booster for Doris.

Carew was impatient for the cabaret to start. Kept tapping his knuckles on the table from time to time. He lived in cabarets but he did not like them. He knew too well which of the gentlemen in dress coats and correct ties were gunmen and bootleggers. He sensed, without always knowing, which were ladies of leisure pretending to be nice, and which the highly respectable, pretending to be naughty. He did not know which he liked the least. It all had very much of a stale cigarette taste. Carew was of good family, like the devil himself. Hating his hell as badly as Lucifer, though neither would have been at home elsewhere.

Craig was different. While he awaited Doris with eagerness, a surge of content showed plainly in his wide brown eyes. There was no rush about it. He had worked twenty years to accomplish his dream of New York and Broadway. He was willing to taste its sweets drop by drop, like absinthe dripped on sugar.

It made a "heady" drink.

It gave him the illusion of being "one of them" in the best known cabaret on

the great white way. This, at thirty-eight, with twenty thousand a year and money in the bank, was dangerous, especially since he had met Doris and she had smiled into his eyes.

The smile was like a crown to his efforts. He, who had been a plugger in Kansas City, was the most envied man on Broadway. It evened things up. Yes, indeed, it evened things up. . . . He felt like Napoleon or Alexander the great: a conquerer of worlds and such.

Carew watched him sardonically. His sucker list was full of Craigs.

THE DRUM crashed into the low buzz of talk, thrusting reflection brusquely aside. The restaurant light dimmed and a huge calcium made fierce moonlight on the dancing floor. Came a sibilant hush of expectancy, a blare of saxophones and a whirl of the opening chorus. Came Doris in scarlet knickers and white satin blouse, a scarlet tam on her flaxen curls. That was the "kick" that made newcomers crane their necks and oldtimers glance up. Only a few, posingly blasé went on eating.

"Here we come! Here we come!" A dozen shrill voices, picked for the tricky build of their owners. A dozen pair of twinkling feet, never still, never still.

"Tum! Tum! Baby vamps of Broadway!"

Speed, noise, lights, by the librettist. Youth and fun by the girls. All of that.

"I for me. Me for myself. Myself for Doris." Doris impishly using her own stuff beneath the din, audaciously at Craig and Carew who caught the words and were pleased variously with her boasting mischief.

Then, unexpectedly, a wistful light behind the gay abandon of her smile.

Carew shrugged his shoulders, annoyed.

"She's soft. Mushed on him!" he muttered, with an impatient glance at Craig. "Those clean living, right thinking birds from the wide open spaces of Kalamazoo can raise hob with the wise ones." Further, he added that he would have to save her from herself—for him-

self—but not in the way one might imagine.

Craig was not saving anyone. To live was enough. For a smart young fellow of thirty-eight, he knew little. Doris, gutter bred, had never been so innocent as she looked. It made her sad without knowing why.

"Bang! Bang!" The signal for more speed.

Doris threw the rhythm of her lithe body into the dance. It was madness to grow sentimental when there were lights and music and applause. Madness to think when life was bursting in her fingertips! Faster! Faster! The drums beat on, playing up to her sudden zeal. The chorus stopped, breathless but she kept on, whirling, swirling, body vibrating from shoulder to toes, head tossing, lips smiling, eyes snapping with feverish intensity, slim hips swaying, feet tapping, "come along folks, come along folks"—The crowd rose to their feet and cheered. A rare thing when art competes with steaks and jealous dining companions.

It was over. Doris, flushed and happy, hurried back to the dressing-room. The world was hers.

"You wouldn't get a swelled head," Maizie, her chum speaks.

A ribald retort from Doris, and they were all back on solid ground.

SHE WAS still flushed when, the act over, she took her place at the table across from Craig. Craig was all admiration. His was the excitement of reflected glory. He looked around at the gay crowd. His people! And all this his by right of conquest. Even Doris. Everyone wanted Doris. And she was with him. It was not bragging. He was like a small boy in Aladdin's palace basking in the princess' favor.

Carew did not miss a thought of it, but he could wait.

"That was a great idea," Craig began, "I'm for it myself. Just like that. Myself for Doris."

"Old stuff!"

"Sure, but good!"

Doris smiled at him. "Do we eat?"

"Gosh! I'm too happy? Waiter!" They gave their order to the too attentive dispenser of food.

A sudden change in Craig's mood: emotion welling up unbidden.

"I'm going to make you love me," he fairly blurted out.

An indulgent grin flipped the words aside, and "Come on, let's dance," she said.

"No!" Truculently.

She looked sidewise into his tense face and smiled again, provocatively.

"I'm — going — to — make you love me," he repeated slowly.

"Well, is that so hard?" Flippant words but with a softly clinging undertone.

"Oh, come on and dance." He rose abruptly, his face set.

They did not speak again. He was holding her in his arms. Trembling slightly with the sweetness of her slim body. Her half closed eyes looked lazily once and again into his.

Carew watched them speculatively. Then grimaced.

"Who would have thought she'd be soft?" he muttered. Craig stepped on air. Thirty-eight had thickened neither his waistline nor his head. It had ripened him, keen for what life had to offer: good to look at, and the world a ripe peach to him.

Carew watched him, planning, planning what he might do with him. Decided, offhand, that he was not worth the effort, and went out into the lobby to waylay Doris when she should decide to leave.

They came along soon. Doris always left early.

Craig was taking her home; the first time. He was still heady like a small boy in a new uniform. People turned to look at him, the man who could win Doris, and New York and a big job. Subconsciously the latter. Consciously Doris! Doris! Doris! She was all he could think about.

While he got his coat, Carew spoke to Doris.

"That offer I made you is worth considering."

"You flatter me."

Carew brushed it aside. "Let's get down to business. You can make thousands and be absolutely your own mistress."

"Sucker bait!" she scoffed.

"Better that than being the sucker. You're one or the other on this street."

Craig was hurrying over.

"I'll think it over," she flicked at him and turned away.

She did not intend to think at all. She looked up into Craig's wide serious eyes. The way he looked at her made her feel good and noble. She had never felt good and noble before. It thrilled her desperately.

Carew watched them out of sight.

"Asking for trouble," he grumbled. "Begging for it. Damn these good guys. They're the ones that make all the mischief. When he's through with her she won't care who she hurts."

He grimaced expressively. Found himself and his thoughts distasteful. Wished that life did not have to be so rotten. Girls like Doris, who never had a chance, got to him. He could never kill the spark of tenderness for their absurd faith that there was goodness in the world somewhere.

He went back, wending his way among the crowded tables to one where men were drinking too much and would welcome diversion. He felt a vicious satisfaction when by adroit suggestion they decided to go on to a gambling club. One of his. His thoughts on Doris. Annoyed that this should be so. . . .

Outside Craig had hailed a taxi. A simple thing. He had hailed many in his life. But the action seemed tremendous. His hand shook as he touched Doris' elbow to help her in. But he hopped in beside her, blithely enough, even humming a little tune under his breath.

Once the door shut the whole situation changed. Faint perfume in his nostrils and the soft feel of furs and silk.

And, "I want to kiss you," he found himself saying, impatiently, demandingly, yet in almost an awed whisper, like a boy let loose with his dreams.

Wistfulness sobbed up in her throat. A man had never asked before. The kind she knew took, if they could. And that kind she would have known exactly what to do with. Laughed at him, bedeviled him, and not kissed him at all, likely enough.

And—"I'll never do anything to hurt you," he said. His lips were on hers.

"I know! I know!" she kept repeating.

She thought that she did.

II

THE worst of it was, Carew could not let it alone. Girls were not his weakness, least of all Broadway girls. But Doris, with her sparkle and youth, her round-eyed mischief, her quaint little air of humility, as if everyone were wiser and better than she—not, of course, that it mattered to her or changed her a bit—well, it got to him, as the saying goes. And he could not do a thing about it, she was so perfectly satisfied to let everything just drift along.

He paced up and down the floor of her gray and gold living-room and cursed inwardly. Cursed aloud now and then while he tried to convince her that she was all wrong.

And it did not get him anywhere.

She twisted all his remarks into pleasantries to be laughed at and teased about.

He stopped once, amazed, before the long mirror and smirked at it sardonically. That he should care whether she got hurt or not was ridiculous. That she should flout him was more so. A fine figure of a man, he. Tall and well built, with breeding showing clear to his fingertips. Not a sign of the rotter he knew himself to be. Women loved him without half a try on his part. All except Doris. And he did not want her to love him. He wanted to keep her

from getting hurt: a thankless task.

"Good lord," he wheeled to say. "I suppose you think that pink and white beauty of yours is going to last forever!"

"A man said that to me eight years ago," she interrupted blandly.

"Eight years?"

"Uh huh! I was eleven at the time," she sighed.

"Well, another eight years isn't going to be so kind, even to you," he told her brutally.

"I suppose not. Still, I shan't be exactly doddering."

"Neither will you look like a tearose with a sunbeam in it!"

She clapped her hands: "Absolutely perfect, David!"

"Oh hell!"

"Don't be cross, David. I can't help forgetting what you're talking about, listening to what you say."

Carew thrust both hands in his pockets and looked her over slowly. "You're either the biggest fool or the cleverest woman in New York."

Her change of mood was instantaneous. "David, I'm the biggest fool."

There was a moment's impasse.

Then gruffly:

"Well, what about it?"

"Nothing." She fingered the heavy silk tassel of her teagown. "Just nothing, David. I'm going to chuck everything."

"Not for Craig?"

"I love him."

"Good Lord!" He looked helplessly around at the exquisitely furnished room. At the clingingly soft draperies. At Doris herself, the daintiest of all luxuries. He drew a step nearer until he was leaning over her; staring straight down into her upturned face.

"Is he going to marry you?"

Her breath caught, bewildered. "Why, I guess so—of course, he's that kind. Straight and fine all the way through—"

"Has he asked you?" Relentlessly.

No answer except a puzzled look.

"Come on, Doris. Don't be a sucker. Has he asked you? You know this

Broadway game as well as I do. Haven't I watched him. It's the lights and the applause, Doris, old girl . . ."

"Don't!" Sharply she cut in. "He's taught me things about love I didn't know existed. It's an ideal with him. I can't explain it. You've got to feel it—here." She touched her white throat with a slim hand. . . .

"Well, is he going to marry you?" he pursued.

"Does it matter so much?"

"Yes, to a chap like him." Hoarsely. "He's not a regular. He's playing at Broadway. Can't you see it. And when the glamor is gone, his conscience will pop up suddenly and make him sick."

"You don't understand," desperately. "David, everything about us is beautiful. He says so. It's the most beautiful thing that ever came into his life. He couldn't ever have a conscience about it. It's so—it's so right."

Carew sat down in a chair. Ugly thoughts were pounding at the thing that once had been a heart. He drew out a cigar and lit it slowly, watching her intense, eager eyes with scornful pity.

"Where were you brought up?" he rasped out sharply.

At any other time he would not have heard the truth. Now she was passionately anxious to convince him. No, not him, but the doubts his questionings were awakening. Doubts to which she would not listen. She leaned forward and looked at him straight, deep through to his scoffing jeers.

And what she told was so weird that he did not believe her. . . .

HERSELF, ragged and hungry, kneeling on a splintery floor beside a tumbled empty bed where her mother had died a few hours since. Thin arms holding the crumpled covers against her sob-racked breast for what poor comfort their warmth could give.

The tramp of heavy feet on the stairs! A cop! Coming for her! . . .

A terrorized vision of a charity home and a panicky leap to her feet to stand

with terror-stricken eyes, staring at the door. A sudden desperate impulse flung her almost headlong through the window to cling to the maze of clothes-line outside. Sliding like an acrobat from one to the other until she reached a sheltering fire-escape—and freedom.

She had never dared go back. After that, shrewd wits alone saved her miserable existence. Sleeping in hallways. Doing odd bits here and there for food. Seeing life in its crudest, most brutal form. Human beasts, nothing more nor less. Marriage adding eternal slavery to the horrors of lust, with its dirty, unwanted children and its hopelessness of escape.

Dodging cops. Everyone about her dodged cops.

"Go on," said Carew when she hesitated. "That's regulation movie stuff."

She picked up her story, apparently unperturbed.

A bit of humor in that sordid life. A chance discovery. Rich folks would pay for a tear—

Outside a theatre, between the acts someone spied her in wide-eyed marvel at the gorgeous gowns and beautiful women. She did not know that women could be beautiful, like that. One called her and gave her a quarter, the most beautiful woman of them all. Then another and another paid tribute to her dazed admiration of their charms. Instinct told her not to smile. They wanted to be sorry for her.

After that she played the theatre every night, always with the same sad, wondering countenance that never failed to draw sympathy.

"And the cakes we kids did eat!"

Carew had been watching her expressive hands while she talked. He had not believed a word of it. Wondered how she expected to get away with it with him. Now he started as if in reminiscence.

"One day," she half giggled, "a young fellow stopped me. Gee, I was scared. I thought he was a fly cop."

"And he said," Carew interrupted her, looking straight into her eyes.

"Don't be soft. Save your money. That baby stare of yours isn't going to last forever. You want to learn one thing and say it over and over to yourself every day. 'I for me, me for myself, myself for—' only it wasn't Doris then. It was . . ."

"It was Sally," said Doris breathlessly. "Sally O'Shay." And— "It was you."

He nodded. . . .

"Oh, I learned that lesson good," she told him. "Used to say it over and over. That's how I got off of Tenth Avenue."

He drew down the corners of his mouth sarcastically.

"The very next night," he reminded her, "I remember seeing you with a red-headed girl. I think you were buying her sugar buns."

Doris' eyes narrowed and an impish grin poked its way through to his complete understanding. It was a ribald thing, that grin.

"You didn't happen to see her a couple of nights later, did you?"

He looked at her gravely, a ghost of a smile on his lip.

"I caught her using my stuff. Spoiling my graft—"

"I don't think you'd—think—me soft," she said, with the wicked gentleness of cat's claws. She shook her head solemnly. "No, I don't think you'd think me soft." She raised one eyelid slowly and he saw all the mockery of the guttersnipe.

It caught him unprepared. He rather wished she would not laugh so rollickingly. He did not want her to be quite like that.

III

SLEEP and love are much alike. Time and events travel quickly and monstrous far in a given period. One's mind is not at all one's own and one's actions are amazingly erratic and uncontrollable. Yet to the victim everything seems both logical and usual. It is only upon waking that the blow falls. Then one can never exactly ex-

plain how one got there or how a minute later he was somewhere else.

Craig could not have explained just when he assumed proprietorship over Doris. Suddenly they were on a certain basis of understanding: a sort of enchanted garden basis where everything that they did was exquisitely beautiful and the only possible thing to do.

There was a certain reverence in his manner toward her that made her feel mounted on a pedestal. She, born Sally O'Shay, heiress to tatters and rags. It put her in the class of good women, who lived in houses and had babies; who read books and played the piano. Poverty, neglect and jeers she could bandy with a rowdy smile, giving as good as was sent. More than that. But Craig's sort of tenderness filled her heart with ready tears of happiness. She wanted desperately to be his kind of a woman. Then he would marry her. Carew was right. Craig was the marrying kind. Some day—she never got any further than that. It seemed indelicate to mention it to Craig.

In fact, Craig was so full of ecstasy he never could get down to cases. She remained, in a manner, the laurel crown of fame resting on his brow. Doris of the Crystal Palace. Of the magazine page. The thrill of the golden princess. And she was his. He became jealously protective. Would not permit her to go home alone. Whatever else he did of an evening, he was on hand to see her safely to her door.

To the other girls he was a joke.

"What ya wasting your time with old West-of-the-water-tower?" Maizie demanded. "Catch me throwing down millionaires for the leading Kiwanis."

"That's the way I win my reputation, being snooty with rich birds."

"Yeah, but it don't give you no diamond lavelières. Listen, kid, you're too young to reform. Do that after you're thirty. You'll have lots of time."

"And you can be awful lonesome along about then, Maizie old girl."

"Oh, gosh," ejaculated Maizie in horror. "Got you thinking respectable."

Yeah!" Suspiciously. "What's he getting out of this?"

But Doris had told too much already. She shut up like a trap. Not to the Maizies would she admit the urge to be like regular folks. Not to them could she explain the sweetness of Craig's love. They would have jeered. A spade was a spade with them.

Worse even than Maizie and her ilk was Carew, sitting at the same table night after night. Always with the same mocking smile. Always insisting upon meeting her eye and holding it until she felt that he could see through to the doubts—no, not doubts. She never doubted Craig. She did not dare.

But Carew seemed to be waiting for something. Waiting, watching for some hint of dissatisfaction. That sense of waiting reached out and caught at her throat.

It was worse when Craig was out of town on one of his many Western trips. It grew hard to face Carew's sinister presence without the reassurance of Craig's tenderness. It became intolerable. Impossible to keep from blurting it out to Craig when he got home.

And— "You'll have to leave this cabaret, honey. After all, it isn't any place for a girl like you," he insisted.

"I guess that's the answer," she agreed easily, liking the way he said "a girl like you."

It did not occur to either of them that getting another job might be difficult. Was not she Doris?

Only she could not land for some reason.

CUNNINGHAM told her frankly to her face that she had lost her pep, her "didn't give a darn" manner. In plain words, she was growing ordinary and satisfied, like a commuter's wife. Soon, very soon, Craig would . . . But she did need money now.

It was Maizie who told her the bitter truth. Maizie had come to live with her so the rent could be paid. A good scout at heart. Maizie, but practical. She had to be. She did not mince

words. She thought it kinder not to.

"It's Carew that's keeping you off the boards. He's got more pull in this town than St. Peter. But what's the matter with angel face? He's been eating here mostly regular for weeks and I haven't seen him buying a meal ticket. Yeah, and if that's love give me . . ."

"Oh, Maizie, can't you see he's not that kind. He's too fine."

"Fine," scoffed Maizie. "Yeah, I'd fine him. What's he think you are, anyhow?"

"Good," said Doris truculently.

"Well, he ain't helping you any at it. What's he think you live on, air?"

"I don't think he thinks about it. I always seem to have everything."

In time, however, these conversations got through and stuck like irritating barbs in Doris' consciousness. But she could not afford to get rid of Maizie. Not until . . .

It made her dispirited, except when Craig was with her. Then she seemed to be driven by some insistent force to be gay.

This got on Craig's nerves in time. He did not feel gay. New York was losing its illusions. Its night lights were silly, blinding advertising signs. Its days were subway crowds and work. There was the thrill of Doris' lips, to be sure, but he had so little left to say to her. Even when he wanted her most he was conscious of a hint of irritation. She was, in her very belief in him, hanging around his neck.

There was not much fun, either, just going up to her apartment, where another girl was rushing in and out, a taunting smile on her face. He had reached out for a handful of sunbeams and got his fist caught in the bars.

Then Thompson, his boss, took him to task. The office would not stand for its men getting Broadway reputations.

Broadway! This was something of a joke. Why, he had learned to hate Broadway. Yet he knew what Thompson meant and he had to lie about it. And he hated that. Oh, he hated the whole sickly mess.

Only, even with all that, Doris' rollicking daring would suddenly flood his memory. The Doris of the Crystal Palace who loved life and did not give a darn. Yes, Broadway was hell. Thompson was quite right. But Doris, no, he could not give her up—yet.

And that evening he was his old self again, considerate, adoring, filled with sweet appreciation. Holding her so tenderly in his arms when he said good-night, that it seemed as if she could not stand the beauty of it. Even Maizie could not spoil its magic with her disgusted:

"Can't he spend anything but the evening? Say, listen to me, kid, if a feller's on the level, he either marries you or buys you diamonds."

But none is so fanatical as he—or she—with a new god. And Craig was Doris' god.

PROBABLY no one thing would have precipitated a crisis. It takes a lot of little things. Craig went west for a trip. Doris got turned down on what seemed a last-chance job. Maizie, for her own good, never slipped up on a chance to rub it in. And Doris bumped unexpectedly into Carew.

"Good heavens," Carew chided. "You're married and never let me know."

"Why so sure?" she snapped.

And his eye traveled exasperatingly over her suit that had lost its dash, and a hat that would have been smart a few months back. He seemed to be screeching at her that Craig did not care. And he did. He did!

She found herself stretched out on the bed sobbing and beating her fists against the silken counterpane that Craig had not bought. He did! She would not listen to the canny doubts of her own heart. He did!

Craig unexpectedly came in. Maizie insolently opened the door and pointed to the room. He rushed by her, stunned by the vehemence of Doris' tears, and gathered her in his arms.

"Oh, honey, what?"

She could not tell him the truth and her attempt to lie was patent.

Instantaneous were his doubts of her. His eyes narrowed to the thoughts that crystalized against his will. There is no glamor in an unkempt weeping woman sobbing out falsehoods. He might have known that such as she—

He looked up to see Maizie in the doorway eyeing him with undisguised hatred.

"Well, what do you think this is, anyhow, a charity institute?" she drawled at him. . . .

So that—was—it. A chill gripped his heart. Sore because she had not been getting presents from him. That's what her love amounted to. Money! He might have known, with a girl like her. Dashed in a moment to dull gray, their colorful, sweet little romance. Ashes.

But against his scorn, Doris flamed to life, her quick glance probing to thoughts he had not intended her to read. And suddenly the tables were turned. It was he who was on the defensive. Still he tried to stick it out.

"Girls like you need life, excitement, work," he assured. "Just love isn't enough."

He grew uneasy under the directness of her gaze. She looked like a wild animal ready to spring, eyes glowing, shoulders drawn.

"Girls—like—me?" she repeated in a husky whisper. "Just what do you mean. Girls like me?"

He was being put in the wrong and he was right. He resented it. "Exactly that. You're used to all the things I can't give you. And I have no right to ask such a sacrifice. It's not fair to you."

"You mean that you don't want me any longer?"

"Of course I want you, but what's the good of it all? Where does it lead to? It's only cheating you." He had struck upon a keynote that let him out clean. He must sacrifice her for her own good. Give her up.

And now his pulses cried out for her. She had drawn herself up with a swift

graceful motion exquisitely familiar to him. He leaped to his feet as if he would take her in his arms. He thought he could explain it better that way.

She eluded him and stood poised in the doorway like a butterfly ready for flight.

"You mean that you don't care for me any longer, just that." And to his amazement she smiled up at him, tossing her head saucily. But her lips trembled with the strain of curving and the glint in her blue eyes would have stabbed him had he been looking into them.

Instead her instant anger choked in her throat. She could laugh away the most beautiful thing he had ever had in his life. She was laughing, and he had really cared. He, who had sacrificed his conscience, his ideals, his sense of honor for a woman like this. And she could laugh!

"Why should I want you?" he demanded roughly. "It's only been a sleighride for you. Watching me make a fool of myself. Why I've let the best woman in Kansas City stay there alone all these months, lying to her, cheating her, because I was mad about you."

"Stop!"

The words rang out like a pistol shot, leaving his recriminations suspended in mid air.

"You mean you're married!" And that phase had never occurred to her.

"Of course, I'm married."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"I didn't think it made any difference—"

"To a girl like me," she finished for him. "Thanks awfully. You've killed something that doesn't belong to a girl like me to have. Faith, I guess you'd call it. But even you are not going to kill the joy it gave me. Some day I may want to take it out and look at it. I may want to remind myself that I was young and innocent once just to feel like other suckers—"

"Don't!" The shame of it overwhelmed him. He had not intended this. He had not intended anything.

Things had begun happening and had just kept on.

"Don't nothing. The joke's on me and I can laugh as well as anyone. Ha! Ha!" She threw back her head, catching quickly at the sobs that stuck there.

"And now you get the hell out of here, back to the best little woman in Kansas City."

He looked at her steadfastly, his eyes filled with hurt despair like a small boy who sees his play bonfire suddenly leap into a menacing flame, that he cannot control.

"Not like this. I can't like this."

"How do you want to leave?" she asked derisively. "What do you think you can do about it?"

There was nothing he could say. Nothing for him to do. Just that. He felt sick all over. He did not even mind Maizie's sneer as he passed her on the way out. In a way it helped.

IV

CAREW KNEW why he had been sent for but he was not particularly happy about it. It is the way of humans to hate the thing they work hardest to get.

His quick eye searched Doris' baby smooth features for some emotion other than guileless innocence. It would have been easier if she had said something. He couldn't sit down, but kept pacing the floor restlessly.

"Well!" he demanded at last.

"I—don't—think—you'll—find—me soft any more," she said, with the wicked gentleness of cat's claws. She shook her head solemnly. "No, I don't think you'll find me soft." She raised one eyelid slowly and he saw all the mockery of the guttersnipe.

Twice he tried to speak. There was something horrible about her deadly poise that held so much of travesty.

"Well," she interrupted his thoughts with ironic brutality. "What do you want of me?"

He had the uncanny feeling that she

was ages old behind that incongruous baby stare.

"Come on, David? Let's get down to the dirty work."

He winced in spite of himself.

"I need money."

"Ada James is leaving the Follies. I'll get you the part." He spoke as if the words were dragged out of him.

"Wasn't there some talk about thousands and thousands for just easy pickings?" she reminded him.

He paused at the window and stared down into the street disgusted with his own feeling of distaste.

It was his own proposition. The very thing he had wanted of her. Only there was a difference. He did not want her to feel at all. He had wanted her to laugh at life. Instead her too placid eyes were the blank masks of one who was momentarily crazed by pain.

"I suppose Craig's all through," he stated bluntly.

"Let's talk about business."

He faced her squarely. "Give him to me," he demanded, watching her intently.

"Barking up the wrong tree. He's not worth it."

"He's good for ten thousand dollars."

"Craig's out." She met his gaze unflinchingly.

"You can't trust women," he muttered.

"I'll play your game with your cards. Isn't that good enough?"

He sat down facing her.

"Let's get down to cases first. Tell me what's wrong with Craig."

She would have refused but his piercing eyes seemed drawing it out of her. She shrugged her shoulders.

"Too many movies," she grinned audaciously in a pretence that he was not forcing confession from her; opening up the throbbing wound that she would have denied.

His eyes did not leave her face.

"That's all," she insisted. "Joke's on us. We both got to believe the movies."

"I'm waiting," he said coldly. "In

my game I've got to know what cards my partner has up his sleeve."

"That's all there is to it. He thought New York was a Hindu paradise and all its ladies houris. Can't blame him can you? Read any scenario." She was truculent.

He waited patiently, holding her eyes relentlessly.

The little gilt clock on the mantelpiece ticked off the minutes stolidly.

"He didn't mean any harm, I guess," she was speaking against her will. "Had to be a sport, didn't he? Thought it was all part of the game. Lights, love, life, Broadway. He'd never had much fun. Worked too hard." She looked steadily off into space.

"And you?"

"Well, I was a sucker, too. I thought he came from the wide open spaces where men are men and women sacred, you know the line. Any movie fan can tell you." She brought herself up with a jerk. "That's what a girl like me gets for thinking." Her mouth twisted into a wry smile that reached in and did queer things to his heart.

"I see," he said slowly. "And what do you think now?"

"I'm through thinking. Folks are the way they're born and you'd better stick to your own kind. Then you don't get hurt."

Carew got up and walked slowly across the room. He had to resist an overwhelming impulse to take her in his arms and he knew that would not do. Not for either of them. He turned, leaning one arm on the mantel shelf.

"I want to tell you this, Doris. You're the first woman I ever met that was really on the level."

"Never mind the bunk," she broke in sharply. "What do you want of me?"

Somehow he could not frame his thoughts. He wished that life did not have to be so rotten. Wished that girls like Doris might keep their absurd faith that there was goodness in the world somewhere. Had a strange abnormal

desire to keep it for her. A girl like her who never'd had a chance.

"Just now I want you to take Ada James' place in the Follies," he found himself saying.

She eyed him with gentle derision through which, however, seemed to gleam a measure of relief. She twisted her fingers, idly, speculatively. "And after that?" she ventured.

In spite of himself, he could not help thinking of the "come-ons" he knew, begging to be fleeced. Wise ones playing Broadway with their pockets lined with money. She could get thousands for them both under his skilled tutelage for nothing more than a smile. What harm?

Baby blue eyes and golden curls! Slender curves and dimpled cheeks! What good would faith do her?

Yet what good was life without it? What happiness had he ever had? He, the super-cynic. What glowing joy she had found in those silly little ideals of hers she had builded out of nothing! How fiercely she had fought and sacrificed for them. Even now she was protecting their memory, glossing them over with excuses, when they were hurting her most.

And suddenly he knew, even while his inner self laughed sardonically, that he was going to keep her faith, "that somewhere, somehow there was goodness in the world." He swallowed hard against a strange tightness in his throat. Strange how she "got to him"!

Quick blood tingled his fingertips. He clenched his fists! Not for him! Not for him! She deserved better than that and by the gods, she was going to have it. Fame, fortune, faith and happiness! But he dared not trust himself to tell her. Too easy to crush her sweetness in his hungry arms. Besides, it was not his way to talk.

"And after that?" she repeated.

"Stick to now," he said curtly. "It's saner. All you've got to do is to make Ada James look like an amateur. And that's some job. You can't afford to miss a bet. And this time, make good on it.

'I for me, me for myself, myself for Doris.'"

He turned on his heel and walked out of the room: out of the house. He had a suspicion that tears were trembling in Doris' eyes. He did not dare to be sure. . . .

THE LITTLE gilt clock on the mantelpiece struck slowly. It roused Doris from her lethargy. Her lips twisted into a whimsical smile. "I suppose it's the only way to get by," she said, "but it seems sort of a lonely way." She hurried into the next room to get her hat. Might as well see Reyburn right away. A bit of song rose unbidden to her lips. Already the world looked brighter. Perhaps she was not quite so lonely as she thought. Most people aren't.

She looked up. Maizie was standing in the doorway.

"Have a smoke?" she drawled. Not for worlds would she have let Doris see pity in her eyes. And yet it was there. Pity that had its roots deep in her own grim knowledge of life.

"Can't. Got to save my voice. Taking Ada James' part in the Follies."

"At a girl. Get into things. Only way to live. Out where you're always wondering what's going to happen next, and knowing it's going to be something. Yeah! Something besides just another day."

Doris busied herself with a lipstick. Maizie was a good scout, but talkative at times. She crushed on her hat.

"Better wear my new coat and that red hat I got yesterday," Maizie suggested. "Reyburn hasn't seen you for a long time. Need to make it snappy. Yeah! And my rings wouldn't do any harm. Nothing like prosperity with them birds."

"Oh, Maizie," she began gratefully.

"Be yourself, kid, be yourself. By the way Bright Eyes called up today."

Doris waited ominously still.

"I told him summer was over. Yeah! And this butterfly and rose stuff was through. Didn't need no parting song.

I made it poetical though Lord knows he's a heck of a butterfly. And he seemed reconciled to be miserable as long as you were happy." Maizie gave a mock sigh and blew a ring of smoke up at the ceiling. "He'd ought to hook up with Eugene O'Neill." Maizie pulled her face down in woeful imitation.

Doris grinned in spite of herself. One had to with Maizie. She hurried to don the new finery and left the house in a blaze of splendor. Maizie waved her goodbye from behind a screen of smoke.

"Good kid," Maizie muttered when she was out of sight. She reached over and picked up the telephone which had been trying to interrupt her thoughts for several minutes.

"No, I can't," she said into the transmitter. "Yeah: My best clothes are out for an airing. No, you can't spend the afternoon—Uh huh!—Just had a friend get stuck that way—Yeah! You heard me—You can take me to Pierre's to dinner. And after that—We'll see!"

She hung up the receiver. "Something's wrong with that bird. Married or broke or something. He's too good to be true." She picked up a magazine and threw herself down on the couch. But she did not read. She was staring off into space.

Finally:

"Gosh, I wonder how it would seem to stay in once and just talk with a guy like that. And get serious. Yeah! Nothing doing!"



Thoughts on the Back of the Menu

After a Martini Cocktail with a Liberal Dash of Absinthe

By Warren Spencer

THE girl selling tracts on starving children—her cheeks are rouged—the head waiter kids her. . . . That old roué—bald headed and senile, watching the girls as they walk up the stairs—these clinging skirts. . . . What a sour note! . . . Does morality change with the generation? Or does it simply find a different expression?—That jazz band is indicative of orgies of all time. . . . No wonder they have eliminated the cabaret. The legs on the dancing floor are there in quantity and quality. . . . The place is full of souses. . . . There's that raw note again. . . . The waiter is sore because I'm not eating. . . . A souse is yelling for everybody to look at his passionate socks. . . . I've often wanted to jot down notes under the influence of licker. Wonder how this will look when I'm sober. . . . Another beggar—an old one—a nickel is enough. What sensuous mush, what suggestive words! . . . A head waiter is going around smelling suspicious looking glasses. Found one with whiskey in it. Drank it down. . . . Darn little food with this \$2.00 dinner, but it's making me sober. Bet this stuff is rotten! It is! . . . There's a cabaret after all. It couldn't be any worse if I were sober. What a merry lot of old women! . . . Not worse though than some of these gold diggers at the tables. There go a couple planning to pluck a poor stiff. . . .



Something happened to her heart when she saw again the man she had loved so many years . . . something inexorable and sad. She was to find that loyalty is one of the very great virtues—and that happiness asserts itself in strange ways.

One Day in a Lifetime

By Isabel Leighton

A WHIRL of golden spokes—blackness and light shuttered across space—out of nothing, something. . . . That was how Diana realized she was awake, so she opened both eyes . . . and found that it was morning.

But there was something about this morning—something special—something unlike all the others that had passed for twenty-three years across her life. Diana dreamily wondered what this something was—it must be something that was going to happen. . . .

Then she remembered! Geoffrey!

This morning was the morning that Geoffrey was coming home! Something as fresh and April-like and radiant as the airy sunlight that filled the room flooded into Diana's breast. . . . Oh, exquisite! . . . Diana shut her eyes with a little sob of happiness. Her thoughts were luxurious in their sweetness. What a shame to do anything . . . just to lie there, Diana thought . . . and dream . . . that would be perfect. . . .

But in an instant she tumbled eagerly out of bed and ran to the window to draw the curtains apart. Diana leaned far over the edge and took a long, deep breath. . . . Then she remembered it hadn't been a peaceful night. . . . She felt a little tired, her slumber had been uneasy, full of troubled dreams. There

had seemed to be a shadow in her mind. . . . Strange. . . . Then, impulsively:

"Morning!" she breathed, "bless you—I thought you'd never come!"

The solemn spectres of the night vanished; yet why had they invaded her dreams, those sinuous, crawling creatures coming ever closer until they seemed to wind themselves about her and strangle her in their coils. Why? But of course it was quite simple, Diana thought, when you came to really think of it—Geoffrey's telegram had done it! Geoffrey, her spotless knight, to whom she'd waved farewell out of this very window on such a day three long years ago.

HE HAD gone in quest of an elusive scorpion, a very special and rare variety, found, when luck attended, in the South American interior, and apprehended at a great risk. Risk! she mused, but it was worth it, when a Fellowship at the Royal Academy was beckoning from the home shore, and the bigwig scientists were impatient to welcome you as the youngest and most enterprising of them. What a story that would make!

She threw on a chiffon negligee and moved toward her dressing-table. She was looking for something—Geoffrey's message. But there was no trace of it. . . . Her eyes narrowed a little and

her mouth took on a petulant look as she searched her memory. Suddenly her eyes rested on the bolster at the head of her bed, and she smiled a curiously sheepish little smile. How could she have forgotten the previous evening's sacred rite—but it was very like her—impulsive, spasmodically sentimental, yet sincere with it all! She drew a much crumpled yellow paper out from under her pillow, stared searchingly at it for a moment and then read:

DEAREST—

Will arrive in Maidenhead at one tomorrow.
GEOFFREY KINGSWAY.

Her eyes caressed each word from the first, which was altogether typical of the man's impetuosity, to the more austere signature. A nice balance, ardor tempered with reason, she ruminated: life with him would be an adventure worth the having. . . .

Her reveries were interrupted by Murray's appearance with the morning chocolate.

"Will you have your tray in bed, Miss Diana or—"

"No, Murray haven't time, just put it on the table and run along," urged Diana, as she pulled a bright woolen stocking over a delicately arched foot. She dressed hastily, between gulps of steaming chocolate. She selected a jumper dress of tan homespun over a white sports shirt, topped it with a jaunty felt hat and surveyed the result critically.

The effect was gratifying, and easily shaved five years off Diana's stupendous twenty-three. A dash of perfume on the lobe of each ear, a touch of powder applied to her nose and chin, and her toilette was completed. Diana ran down the wide stairs into the kitchen, demanded an apron, basket and shears, and hurried into the garden.

IT WAS rather pathetic to look upon the remnants of the summer's departed glory, thought Diana; there had been an abundance of every sort of bloom, and the garden looked quite like autumn without them. She looked

anxiously about her, perplexed for the moment, but presently with a little cry she bounded to the far corner next to the garden wall.

"Marigolds!" she murmured happily. "They are like your hair when the sunlight plays upon it," Geoffrey had said in that self-same garden three years ago. It seemed but yesterday . . . he would remember! How they would laugh over those tête-à-têtes of other days! And he would kiss away the tears that would insist on forming little pools of brine in the corners of her luminous eyes—tears of pure joy at seeing him again; women are like that. . . .

A shrapnel of sound burst upon her ears—scramble, scrabble, scratch. Diana whirled around. A greenish button bobbed up on the other side of the wall. It was followed by a greenish thing like a pancake, but bigger. Then four feet away something else bobbed above the parapet. But there was no mistaking what *that* was! It was a brogan—a handsome, burnished size eight and a half brogan; and it was attached to a heather colored leg. . . .

Underneath the greenish pancake—which turned out to be a perfectly good cap—a face appeared. But it was really more than a face, it was a grin. It was one big, all-encircling grin, like the Cheshire cat's.

"Boo!" shouted the grin.

"Cheerio!" the grin continued, and a pair of twinkling eyes emerged from the middle of it.

"Oh, Ronnie," cried Diana, "what's the matter with the front gate?"

Somehow, inside herself, Diana knew perfectly well what was the matter with the front gate. It was way round the corner, it was stupid, and it was too easy—the wall was far better! Far better for a vigorous, clean cut, ruddy, gloriously young young man dressed in woolly tweeds, such as Ronnie Braithwaite. . . . But she couldn't bring herself—quite—to admit it. Particularly on this day—this very extra special sort of a day, that only happened once in a lifetime, when Geoffrey was coming home—coming home—the words sang

in her heart. . . But as they sang—well, Diana couldn't quite be sure, but was there, or was there not a little minor twang in the melody, as she looked up at the very young and very vigorous and very jolly young man perched on the wall in front of her.

"Di—I thought you might ride with me this morning," Ronnie said by way of further greeting.

"So sorry, Ronnie, but I'm too busy to change my togs. Another time," replied Diana kindly.

"I'll sit up here a while and watch you, if you'll let me," Ronald pleaded.

"You know what happened to Humpty Dumpty," bantered Diana.

Ronald vaulted over the wall and dropped at her feet. . . .

"I took the only tumble that ever spelled disaster for me, when you moved next door," he said quite seriously. "Oh, Di, dear, if only—"

"Stop it, Ronnie, please! How often have I told you you mustn't say these things to me?" she begged.

"I know, but—"

"Come in another time, there's a dear; I've so many things to do, and I want to be alone."

"Righto, only—"

"Only you can't resist the temptation to make love to me, and you don't mean a word of it," she retorted laughingly.

"Goodbye-ee," she added, "I'm going in."

"Half a moment, Di—" he said, following her to the door, "won't you put one of your posies in my buttonhole, just to show me that you're not angry with me?"

"One of these, Ronnie?" she queried. "Oh, I—I couldn't, not a marigold," she replied with confusion.

"Di—what's come over you, what have I done?" he asked anxiously.

"Nothing, Ronnie, really, but a marigold wouldn't suit you at all; here's a tuberosa," she continued excitedly, "that you'll like a lot better, I know. There now," she added, slipping it through his buttonhole, "you're decorated, and I'm going indoors. Goodbye—"

"Goodbye," he echoed, and started off resolutely. "You're quite sure you've got to go in so early?" he questioned as he turned at the gate.

"Quite sure," Diana replied, but she watched him until his six feet of vigorous manhood retreated slowly over the hill-top. He was a rare gentleman, she thought, every inch of him—a chivalrous, clean-thinking boy, but so unworldly—not a bit what you'd call fascinating or debonair; he lacked Geoffrey's man-of-the-world bearing. He was painfully frank, honest to a fault and needed seasoning, she rambled, that was it! . . .

After all, what did it matter? It was a bit embarrassing, though, having Ronnie go on so with Geoffrey's coming little more than an hour away. Could he really be serious about it? Like as not he was simply trying to be amusing. She went indoors to arrange her flowers. This done, Diana ran excitedly to her room; there was her wind-blown hair to be redone, and only a few minutes to do it in. . . . She was hastening downstairs again when the purr of an approaching motor brought her flying to the garden gate.

II

HOW to make that unruly heart of hers behave! It was thumping like a sledge-hammer in her ears, beating against her breast until the sheer pain of it made her faint; involuntarily she closed her eyes and grasped the gate post in support; her senses were reeling and she raised her free hand to her forehead as if to stave off the numbness that seemed to be descending upon her. . . .

The next thing she heard was Geoffrey's quiet voice, "Darling, I've come back."

"Oh, I'm glad, glad," she murmured, as she reached up to kiss him, and return his almost shy embrace, "I've lived for this. . . ."

A constrained silence fell upon them. Diana groped vainly for words, and found herself strangely tongue-tied.

They sat down on the verandah and she racked her brain for repartée and finding none remained silent; Geoffrey came to the rescue and blurted awkwardly, "Do you mind if I smoke?"

"Why, no, certainly not," said Diana over-emphatically. "By the way," she continued, recovering her composure again, "you must overlook mother's not being here to welcome you back; she had to go to town."

"Of course; no doubt I'll see her there, I've got to get back in an hour myself; Bainbridge is counting on going over some work with me."

"You'll have time for lunch surely," she questioned. "I had counted on your staying."

He consulted his watch nervously, "If you're having it early," he answered shortly.

"It's ready now," she replied. "I didn't think train breakfasts were very substantial, so I ordered early lunch."

"Good," he answered with decision, and started into the room.

She caught up with him and slipped her hand through his arm.

"Time has dealt kindly with you, Geoffrey," Diana said in an effort at conversation.

"No, my forty years weigh heavily upon me," he answered meditatively; "I feel centuries old," and seated himself at the table.

How grave he seemed, and how lined, she thought, as she looked at him furtively over the flowers; but she would bring back the smile that used to lurk in those dear eyes, restore the spirit of gaiety that seemed to have left him.

He unfolded his napkin and she watched him eagerly; a marigold dropped to the floor unnoticed; she suppressed a sob with difficulty. . . . It was as if he had died, and she were standing mourning at his bier; the death of memory, that was even harder to bear, for it marked the passing of her illusions, the dying of her faith!

She pulled herself together with a mighty effort; if this silence continued she would scream. Anything, anything to make conversation! He must

retrieve himself, she couldn't bear it!

"Geoffrey," she began haltingly, "what are you planning to do, now that you've come back? Are you going to take the chair at once, or shall you take a holiday before you begin teaching?"

"No, I'll get right after it; there's no use loafing," he replied definitely.

"No, I suppose there isn't," she acquiesced.

FOR THE first time in her life she found something inordinately pitiful in the sight of the man across the table from her. The tan of his face which had erstwhile seemed so dashing, so reminiscent of tropical adventuring, now, suddenly, seemed merely a glaze over the pasty color of a man who feels his forty years. The lines of his face, which once had seemed to her so sturdy and virile now seemed . . . wrinkles! . . .

Suddenly she was aware that Geoffrey had caught her look, and the expression of his own face had changed—saddened. She saw that by some extraordinary sixth sense he knew what had been passing in her mind. A wan smile played across his features, and pity—such pity as no one should dare or be able to feel toward a loved one—surged into her heart! How terrible, that she should feel that way! How terrible that he should realize it! How terrible that the feeling was inexorable—there simply was nothing to do about it.

Diana's lips set firm. She tossed her head high. Courage and loyalty she had, and courage and loyalty she could give to this man who was the shell of the man she had loved so devotedly, this man who had crumbled, crumbled in the baking heat and seeping fever-laden lands of the south. There was warmth in her heart—and the surging pity that would never give her peace, this pity that was almost indecent, or at least made the object of it almost indecent. . . . Diana instinctively felt herself growing old, shrivelling. Almost the color left her cheeks. Her flesh, so firm, so lithe and young, suddenly

seemed aged, desiccated. . . . Was that what pity, what disillusion did for one? Was that to be her lot? . . .

Well, what if it were, Diana said proudly to herself. Geoffrey would never know. She would be loyal. She would build her life on that basis. A promise was a promise. Setting her dainty chin more firmly, she swore to herself that Geoffrey would never have reason to reproach her, never feel that he had thrown away his life. . . . She would carry on—play the game—keep the faith. . . .

As she mused, she raised her eyes, a little wet, a little desolate. . . . Geoffrey had risen to his feet. There seemed to be a look in his face that she didn't recognize, a look of poignant comprehension. But a smile began to play across his lips as he strode around the table and stood beside her. It was the smile of a man who speaks with a dearly beloved child, a child whom he understands, for whom he has compassion—a child he would seek to protect, to save from the harshness, bitterness, tricks of the world. . . .

"Diana," he said simply, still with that poignant smile playing at the corners of his lips, though his eyes were kindly and grave, "Diana, you are a brave, sweet girl, and I love you as I love nothing else on earth—my work, my ambition, my peace of soul."

He paused. Diana looked up softly, and this time the tears left her eyes. She could not veil the proud flash in them. Was he about to plead for himself, to throw himself at her mercy, to beg for pity? How abject it would be! How beastly, if he should plead with her, who without pleading stood ready to give him herself! It made the sacrifice hardly worth while. . . . But what was he saying?—

"Will you permit me to release you, Diana?" his voice was soft, well modulated, dark. She caught her breath. This pity which was rowelling her heart surged up again—it was too much. She couldn't stand it!

Slowly, quietly, darkly, he was continuing:

"I realize what a terrible thing for you our marriage would be, dear," he said. "And if"—his voice was very tender—"and if it were terrible to you, it would be terrible for me—unspeakably terrible, to see you fade, to see you sweeping remorselessly forward to a semblance of my years. I could not bear it. It would be murder—the murder of your youth, of your heart." He paused. "It would be the murder of my heart, too, Diana," he said firmly. . . . There was a silence except that Diana sobbed softly.

"Youth turns to youth, dear," said Geoffrey, "not to anything else. . . . And that is right, and sweet, and . . . merry."

"Diana," he continued, "I shan't expect you to speak. . . . Any words of yours would be too kind, too darling, I could not hear them and be brave. I shall go now. Do not try to stop me. . . . I want you to think of me this way—loving you, but never hurting you!"

His voice seemed to come from far away.

"Do not pity me, Diana," the voice said softly—it came through her sobs, through darkness as she shielded her eyes—"do not pity me, or seek to bring me back, I shall be gone tonight. . . . And my lot is not altogether unhappy. In the south there is a lazy tropic island—a coral reef that, I think, loves me, and where I shall be happy. . . . It has a great pull on the heart, that shadowy reef with its phosphorus at night and its rainbows by day. . . . I shall be headed South, Diana—South on the Long Trail, the trail that it always new! . . . It is best. . . ."

There was no more sound, the words had drifted into thin air. A muffled thud of a door shutting was more a concussion than a noise. . . . For a long time there was nothing in the room where Diana sat but the trailing cloud of sorrow—inevitable, poignant, dark. But through it like a whisper came the word "Best—best—best." How long she sat there Diana did not know. . . . Then she found herself in her own room, in the dusk, her head on

a tear-wet pillow. . . . How noble Geoffrey was, she thought—and yet—how ineffably right—how fine—how brave . . . to—go. . . .

A heart will mend . . . a nose needs a little powder, and there is balm for smarting eyes. . . . Diana, a little subdued but with an emotion of beauty in her—the beauty of having beheld a brave and honorable act—came slowly back to the world of everyday. The twilight was over now, and from the locust trees without the window a cicada began to strum his night-time serenade. . . . Almost time for mother to be home, thought Diana.

Then a new ache fluttered into Diana's breast . . . it frightened her. It made her angry with herself, it made her sad. . . . What was it—just what was it? . . .

She thought of wise words . . . "Youth turns to youth" . . . "not to anything else!" . . . "It is right" . . . and again—"It is right!" . . .

DIANA found herself in the garden. The night was perfect, and the harvest moon shone down upon her disconcertingly. She stretched out her arms languorously, and for several minutes stood watching the heaven's starry miracles slowly take their accustomed places. How intensely beautiful it was!

A long, low whistle sounded from over the garden wall and a tiny suggestion of a wistful smile crept into her face. Why it had always been, and she had brushed it fearfully aside. Her breath came quickly, and her hand

sought her heart, as if to stop its mad pulsating; she was free—free—not even her visionary knight stood between them now. Another moment and Ronald had stepped out of the darkness.

"I hope I didn't frighten you," he said.

"Perhaps I almost expected you," Diana half whispered.

He drew her hand through his arm and led her out of the garden; the flowers bent near to breaking beneath his tread.

"I'm sorry, Di," he murmured, "I'm afraid I've done for your marigolds."

"No matter," she answered gaily; "watch out for the rose beds just beyond."

He took her hand, and guided her out of the gate; the contact thrilled her, and she trembled at his touch; they walked silently.

"Diana," he said a little nervously, for he was so absurdly bashful, "Di, dear, I—" and as he looked into her eyes, "you know what is in my heart. I've got to keep on saying it, though you keep telling me forever to stop." Then as he listened for her customary mild reproach, and found only silence, and a pair of downcast eyes, he questioned more boldly, "Diana—what are you thinking?"

"I'm thinking, Ronnie dear," she answered happily at last, "how wonderful it is to be young—"

"Yes, darling," he said, as his arms closed about her.

"And falling in love," she concluded, when she was once more able to speak.



HAPPINESS: the suspicion that one is having a good time.



LAW: the steam shovel with which man attempts to eat a grapefruit.



A brilliant novel of the Red Magic of Love and its elementary power in modern society.



The Eternal Huntress

By Rayner Seelig

The Story So Far:

ISABEL RAYBURN, amateur sculptress and member of New York's smartest young social set, loves Richard Du Maurier. He is a rather mysterious figure, whose par-

entage and resources are unknown to most of the group he associates with, but a man of impeccable charm and breeding. He joins the table at the Ritz where Isabel and her sister Cecil

are lunching with Susie Burnham, a pretty and petulant girl of great wealth, whose father is a broker of questionable reputation.

Du Maurier, who rather resents Isabel's almost too frank affection for him, is charmed with Susie, who is invited to a theater party with Isabel, Cecil, Du Maurier and others that evening. Isabel returns to her Washington Square studio where her father, Adrian Rayburn, is ensconced, a complete invalid, his face scarred and battered by the attack of a leopard in his old tiger-hunting days fifteen years earlier. Adrian is a bitter cynic who waits for death with a contemptuous leer and drinks constantly. He predicts sardonically that Isabel will hunt Du Maurier like a tigress, and that her final victory over the young man will be brought about only at the cost of his (Adrian's) death.

At the theater that night, and later at a fashionable cabaret, Susie engrosses Du Maurier's attention. He takes her home, and Isabel feels herself defeated. On Isabel's return to the studio she finds that Adrian has had an attack of delirium tremens, and has raved about the white leopard that he connects in some way with his own death, and with Isabel's possible marriage.



Chapter Eight

LIKE MOST modern girls, Isabel prided herself upon being an atheist. Nevertheless she could not restrain a profound interest in everything that pertained to the esoteric.

Somehow she connected her emotions in the restaurant with Adrian's hallucination. The night's disconnected happenings seemed bound together by a common undecipherable cause. Her sense of foreboding, her jealousy of Du Maurier, the sudden symbolism of the dance in that moment when the veil had been lifted, even her father's words,

"There is magic in love," fitted like segments of a picture puzzle into a scheme too vast in its scope, too minute in its detail, to be more than dimly and awfully visioned by finite eyes.

Having, like most atheists, a dread of witchcraft thoroughly ecclesiastical in spirit, Isabel was frankly relieved when the doctor pronounced Cecil's prosaic diagnosis approximately correct. The clear morning sunlight had already done much to dispel her morbid fancies, and after the vague and threatening perceptions of the night, it was almost pleasant to find herself faced with a problem as tangible as that of delirium tremens.

Adrian, of course, laughed the doctor out of countenance. In the first place, he didn't care whether he lived six months or six weeks. In the second place, delirium tremens didn't vanish with the rapidity of this attack. And in the third place, Doctor Schlegel, like all civilized scientific gentlemen, was a consummate ass.

Cecil, left alone with her father, did not mince words.

"You've frightened Isabel half to death with your talk about magic," she accused, running irritable fingers through her hair. "It's all very well for you to drink yourself to death if you want to—"

"That's an undutiful remark," said Adrian. "You should honor thy father."

"And it's all very well," Cecil continued doggedly, "for you to see pink lizards, or green elephants, or—"

"White leopards," corrected Adrian amiably.

"—purple leopards, for all I care," snapped Cecil. "But don't blame them on the supernatural, I beg of you."

"I don't," said Adrian blandly, "I blame them on the sub-natural. King Satan lives underground. As for Isabel, one glance at her was enough to show that her attack of nerves resulted from nothing as unimportant as a father."

Cecil gave him a swift look, but refrained from questioning the source of his information.

"Consider her a little, Adrian," she

urged. "I'm afraid she'll be very unhappy if Du Maurier doesn't come back. . . ."

CECIL'S FEARS were justified at short notice.

Du Maurier did not come back, nor so much as telephone, on Sunday, Monday, or the days that followed. Isabel white lipped with determination, repressed her feelings and applied herself to work. The statue of Orpheus and Eurydice, which she and Du Maurier had planned together, was almost completed: she had told him so on Saturday night. Valiantly, she hoped against reason that he would come to see it, if not to see her. But Wednesday passed, and when at eight an unexpected caller was announced, it was not Du Maurier, but Laurence Sanville, the most faithful of Isabel's suitors. Larry was a young man of the type which Du Maurier characterized as dumb but happy. Incurably optimistic, he was always liking people and then finding out that they were rotters who imposed upon his good nature. It was through his kind offices that Mrs. Dalgren, his sister, had invited Susie Burnham to the Easthampton house party where Susie met Isabel and started her social ascent. But Larry was a nice boy, and if he was not as brilliant a conversationalist as Du Maurier, at least he played as good a game of polo, danced as well, and loved Isabel better.

His first words sent an arrow through her heart.

"I hear it's all off with Dick," he said, and reached for her hands.

She moved away, remarking that news—she almost said bad news—traveled quickly.

"It's good news for me," Larry informed her. "Not that I'm flatterin' myself, but one less rival is one rival less. Isabel dear, tell me there is a chance."

"There isn't, Larry: I don't want to encourage you, when I know we can never be anything but friends." And having said the conventional thing, Isabel looked winsomely up at him. So

presently they were sitting on the couch, Larry holding her hand and being refused for the ninth time. For, "I'm very fond of you," said Isabel. "Indeed Larry, I love you very much. But I'm not in love with you at all."

"Why not give it a trial?" he begged. "Mother has enough money to support us in the manner to which we are unaccustomed."

Isabel laughed, and, his frivolous pose shattered to fragments, Larry caught her in his arms. She pushed against him with clenched hands, and swung her head from side to side to escape his lips. "Oh damn that chap Du Maurier," he groaned. "I think you really love him. And he goes gallivantin' with that little red haired—" he stopped, recalling the precept that one must not say what one thought of a woman—to another woman. He fell on his knees beside Isabel and begged her to forgive him for "bein' such a beast."

"There is nothing to forgive, Larry, old boy," said Isabel, passing maternal fingers across his crisp tobacco colored hair. "You see it's true. I'm just a silly girl. But I'll get over it," she added sagely, "and so will you."

He squatted on the floor, and smiled, instantly hopeful after the manner of some men and all fools. "But I won't get over it," he promised. "I'll be like Cyril Harcourt is about your Aunt Veronica. I'll wait for twenty years if necessary." And having talked himself into a sanguine mood, "You'll see," he predicted. "Some day you'll come back to Darry. I'm not handsome," which was a lie, "or clever," which was certainly the truth, "but I'll be waitin', Isabel. I'm loyal."

Isabel, her thoughts elsewhere, managed to laugh with elaborate cynicism and spent the remainder of the evening acting old and tragic.

ON THURSDAY morning, reconsidering Larry's words, and thinking not only of her broken heart but of the jokes her friends would make about it, Isabel felt resentment rising to

a climax. And at this point it inevitably resolved into action.

She got up early, ostensibly to put a few finishing touches to the sketch. But Cecil, entering the studio an hour later, found her standing in her nightgown, regarding with an expression of cold distaste the two finely molded figures on the stand.

"What's the matter?" asked Cecil.

"The matter? What isn't the matter? I realize now that my work has been so much wasted time. This—this thing—is rotten!"

Cecil, pausing to throw her fur coat on the cushion studded divan, made an exasperated movement. "Don't be a fool. It's the finest thing you've ever turned out. Anatomically those figures are flawless."

Isabel managed a mirthless and melodramatic chuckle. "Anatomically flawless," she mimicked. "Perhaps if I work hard enough they will use my models to teach public school children the rudiments of physiology." Her teeth came together with a click. "Before you," she intoned mockingly, "you see a statue entitled *Orpheus and Eurydice*. This anaemic looking youth is he of whom Pope wrote that when,

*'High on the stern the Thracian
raised his strain*

*Transported demigods stood round
And men grew heroes at the sound'.*"

Isabel pointed a trembling finger at the second figure.

"That muscular woman with the large feet," she continued, "is she for whom this same son of Apollo and Calliope crossed the river Styx into the regions of Pluto, and for love of whom he was torn limb from limb by jealous maidens. . . ."

"Your knowledge of mythology at least is excellent," said Cecil, growing caustic at what she considered hysteria on Isabel's part. "You know it is good." She advanced, and looked more closely at the group.

The silk curtains were drawn back, and through the north window fell a blanched and shadowless light. The statue was admirable.

"You know it's good," Cecil reiterated. "It's the best work you've ever done."

Then Isabel did an astonishing thing. There was a modeling tool on the stand, and, taking this up, Isabel proceeded with deliberate malignity to destroy the labor of many months.

Cecil stood back and let the murder proceed. Only when there was nothing left but a slashed and shapeless mass of plasteline she said: "It was the best work you had ever done."

"I know it," Isabel replied, and looked stupidly at the flat instrument in her hand. Slowly her eyes returned to what was left of her masterpiece, filling with tears as she saw the protruding ugly stems of the framework. "It was good," echoed Isabel. "I may never again do anything as good."

Cecil asked disapprovingly what on earth had made her act like such a fool.

"Du Maurier." Isabel's answer was swift and savage. "It was his concept, his spirit, and when he . . . left me . . . he destroyed it as surely as though he had used this knife." Isabel turned away from the ruin. "I hate him for it," she cried. "I hate him for killing whatever is best in me. I hate him because I can't live without him." And Isabel, by nature incapable of sustained anger, did for a moment know that hatred which is born of love. And she was torn by such lust for vengeance as might have stirred the dark Erynis, when with viper haloed hands they rose from Tartarus upon the wings of night.

"I hope you've relieved yourself. . . ." Cecil's cool censorious voice was like a dash of ice-water on Isabel's anger.

"Relieved myself . . ." Isabel threw herself upon the couch, and lay there motionless. She was still lying there when Cecil, glancing at her watch, realized that it was after nine, and knew she would be late to the office.

ALONE, a flood of memories; released with the breaking of the dam of control, rushed mercilessly down upon Isabel, submerging her in their

bitter-sweetness. She saw the table at which she and Du Maurier had first met, a little over a year before. A long, flower-strewn table, with a glint of silver in the center, and a glint of jewels and white throats at the sides. She remembered how Du Maurier had looked at her, suddenly exclaiming: "By the Lord, you know how to blush!" Then he had turned to the lovely Princess Dalmetchi-Davenza, murmuring—"Cynthia, do watch Miss Rayburn blush. You may never see such a thing again, unless you retire to the country on alimony when you are forty-two. . . ."

She remembered their first tea together, over a small table in the Plaza Grill, and how her hand had shaken when she gave Du Maurier his cup. . . . She saw, more clearly than ever before, countless long evenings in the lamplit studio; herself reclining like a little odalisque upon this very divan, while Du Maurier played Chopin with much feeling and very little technique, and made love to her with much technique and very little feeling. . . . She remembered some of the books he had sent during the early months of his strange wooing—*Aphrodite* by Pierre Louys, Flaubert's *Salambo*, Wilde's *Salomé*—three histories of women who had demanded the impossible, and received it, and paid with glorious death for their glorious transgressions. What were those morbidly beautiful lines of Swinburne. . . .

"Yea, for my sin I had great store of bliss
Rise up, make answer for me, let thy kiss
Seal my lips hard from speaking of my sin.
Lest one go mad to hear how sweet it is."

At those words Isabel's heart contracted within her. How foolishly she had played the game of life, happy in half-measures, in half-delights. Assuredly, Isabel told herself, it was the fools rather than the sinners who paid the price of evil. . . . And why, she asked herself, why, in the name of God, had she denied those first fierce stirrings of nascent passion; why had she not taken the glorious opportunity that was now forever gone?

S.S.—Sept—4

Pictures closed in again upon her tortured comments. She saw their parting for the summer, her tears, his smiles; the day of her return, when weakness or strength, she hardly knew which, had carried her back into his arms clad with new understanding. These had been the happiest days, the days when she and Du Maurier had begun to plan the *Orpheus and Eurydice*. With what contempt she had set aside the figure, already half completed, which she had named *Sappho at Dawn*, and vigorously set to work upon the newer concept. . . . So winter had come, softly and swiftly, as is the way of winter, with no more noisy forerunners than the bright heraldry of golden leaves and red. There were still cold evenings of immaculate starlight viewed across Washington Arch, and warmer, quieter evenings alone in the studio, nonetheless pleasant for all that the playing of Chopin had become less frequent, and the love making more so. And then Du Maurier had left for the South and. . . .

Isabel began to shiver. After all, it was December, and she had on nothing but a thin nightgown. An attack of the "flu" would hardly improve matters. With this philosophical reflection Isabel arose from the divan and began to walk toward her bedroom. But on the way she stooped, and going behind an illuminated screen in one corner of the studio, drew out a draped stand, from which she removed the cover.

The figure of Sappho, even in its present form, had much merit. It was the body of a kneeling woman, with arms stretched above her head in a gesture of awakening, awakening to a new day, a new passion, a new tragedy. Abruptly Isabel re-covered the model in its soiled swathings, and turned away. As she turned her eyes fell upon the calendar on which she and Cecil scrawled their daily engagements. It was Thursday. She had promised Susie to shop with her that afternoon.

Squaring her shoulders Isabel entered her bedroom and began to dress.

Chapter Nine

CYRIL HARCOURT, a tall stooping man with eyes like a vulture's, and a stern, finely molded mouth, was known by all his colleagues as a stickler for efficiency. He had been a lawyer before he became senior partner of Harcourt, Hutchinson and Vincennes, and his affairs were carried on with an excessively legal exactitude. Nevertheless the severe lines of his face relaxed, and the keen eyes softened somewhat, when Cecil entered.

"Good morning, Miss Rayburn," he said. "You are. . . ." he glanced at the leather traveling-clock on his desk, "You are exactly fifty-four minutes late. That is quite unpardonable."

"Shall I leave at once," Miss Rayburn enquired formally, "or shall I wait until evening?"

Then Mr. Harcourt and Miss Rayburn looked at one another and laughed. "I think you had better stay, Miss Rayburn," said Mr. Harcourt.

A few hours later the same two made their way through a restaurant packed with men, and seated themselves at a small table.

Having delivered the optimistic prediction of a big bull market due after the New Year, a prediction which was subsequently justified, as were most of Mr. Harcourt's words, he enquired genially: "How's the little sister?"

Cecil had long known that her stern and irascible employer was capable of a vast deal of tender sympathy. A gentleman of the old and almost extinct régime, Harcourt was an idealist to the finger tips, but one of those rare idealists who can also be practical if the necessity arises. Moreover, he knew Adrian.

"Isabel's in rotten shape," Cecil admitted. "She's spent the morning smashing up the best piece of sculpturing she ever turned out. Her sweetheart's given her the air, and Adrian's been filling her head with superstitious nonsense. I might as well tell you," she continued, lowering her voice, "that he had an at-

tack of D.T.'s on Saturday night. The doctor noted some unusual circumstances, but then, as he wisely remarked, Adrian is an unusual person. He thought he was being chased by a—a—white leopard. And he told Isabel some nonsense about its being an omen."

Cecil paused while Mr. Harcourt gave the waiter their order.

"Isabel's so beastly high-strung," she went on presently. "Moody! But I'm afraid she's very like mother. Mother was the most obstinate person in the world when she had a fixed idea, for all her apparent pliability. She always got what she wanted, you know . . . even father."

"I'm afraid she stopped getting it after that," observed Mr. Harcourt with a rueful smile. He added: "I think little Isabel will get what she wants, too. But it'll be a hard siege, my dear, and there'll be wreckage in her trail, broken hearts, and what not. Never yet was a citadel laid siege to and won that fine souls and strong bodies didn't pay their toll of sacrifice. It's the law, Cecil," said Mr. Harcourt somewhat sadly, his eyes seeming to brood upon something long past. "Never a victory, never a heart's desire attained, without the price of a perfect jewel paid, even though the jewel turns out to be paste, and the victory is changed into a sad disillusionment."

Cecil looked up at Mr. Harcourt with anguished eyes, though her voice was as calm as ever. "But he's not worth it. I can't bear to see her suffering for a man who has nothing to offer but a ready wit and the profile of a god."

Mr. Harcourt sighed. "Even you, Cecil, who are as sensible and farsighted a child as I know, fall into the common error of people at large. For you see in people no more than what you read into them, and your little sister, Cecil, will see no less than what she reads into this man who has bewitched her. And yet neither of you see him clearly. . . ." And Mr. Harcourt looked up, about the crowded restaurant. "How few of these men have aims or ideals which

either you or I could comprehend. And yet, for all that, these very aims and ideals are brighter to them than the brightest of lights . . . yes, brighter than the sun itself. . . ." He jerked back his head, a humorous expression settled about his mouth, "You have led me into philosophizing, Miss Rayburn, and I did not intend to philosophize, but to give you good advice, so that you might ignore it."

"What shall I do?" asked Cecil.

"A friend of mine, Professor Brent, laid down a law for the answer to such a question. 'Do nothing.' Beware, Cecil, of meddling with the machinations of the gods, for they are jealous gods, and like to play their little games alone. And now," said Mr. Harcourt, abruptly changing the subject, "I have another matter to speak of. Yesterday I received a visit from your charming aunt, Veronica. And I must say, that charming as she is, she's hardly the person to be left executrix of a will."

"Well, you do the managing," said Cecil, and added: "What did she want this time?"

"She came for legal advice," replied Mr. Harcourt briefly. "Do you remember, about a week ago, that some of her bonds matured?" Cecil nodded. "Well, I handed her over about ten thousand dollars in cash, with the paternal advice to put it in Liberty bonds. I've known Veronica since she was a pink-faced kid with pig-tails, up in Connecticut," Harcourt remarked reminiscently, "and I know her fiendish luck with speculations. She had a tip on Johnson Petroleum, which has been going up and down like a drunken thermometer, and wanted me to buy it for her. When I told her I wouldn't, she got excessively cross and walked out of the office. Well, it seems that she walked down the street until she came to a house which announced on a sign that it had a direct wire—you know the kind."

"I can guess," chuckled Cecil. "A wire extending directly under the desk in the order department."

"More than likely. At any rate, Veronica walked in, got the manager

of this outfit, and told him she wanted a thousand shares of Johnson 'Pet' at the market. They reported the purchase of the stock at sixty, and said they were mailing her receipt and confirmation at once, and to be ready for a margin call at short notice. Oddly enough," said Mr. Harcourt, "her tip was straight. Johnson went up eleven points before the market closed. Regular skyrocket stuff. Her confirmation wasn't in the mail next morning, and by noon, with the stock up another eight points, she called up the place and told them to sell at the market. And here's the joker: they came right back with a 'Must have made an error, madam, we have no record of your name on our books.' And that was all she could get. They stuck to the story that they had never heard of her. Even if the thing came to court there'd probably be a dozen people to swear she was crazy. So you see . . ."

"That Aunt Veronica's out ten thousand bright little dollars, and has absolutely no come-back," supplemented Cecil.

"It looks that way." Harcourt called the waiter and paid his check. "This is the sort of firm we come up against every day. I'd like to overstep my rights and carry on a little investigation of my own. And I want you to help me, Cecil, because I can trust you implicitly."

"Who are they?" Cecil asked, flushing faintly at the compliment.

"Firm calls itself Burnham and Levy. Have their main offices in Philadelphia—by the way, I'll be wanting you to run over there later on—and a branch here. Levy has money and Burnham brains. But they're a pair of thieves and I don't care who hears me say it. I understand Burnham used to run a gambling house at Saratoga, and another outside of Atlantic City until about six years ago."

He looked at Cecil, who met his gaze with a stare of incredulity before she burst into uncontrollable laughter. "Take me back and put me to work," she commanded. "I think I'm going through the preliminary stages of *dementia praecox*."

Chapter Ten

A MILD atmosphere of mystery surrounded the figure of Richard Du Maurier, like an aureole of light.

In the flesh he was there. One could talk to him, walk with him, dine, wine, and dance with him. One could admire his shrewd appraisal of human beings in its apt trick of phraseology, but where he came from, who he was, or whence he derived his excellent education were problems which few people could answer. Certainly those few did not choose to do so.

He had made his first appearance in the particular set of New York society with which he later became identified—a set in which the men played polo and the women angled for titles—during that season which followed the signing of the Armistice. Still in his captain's uniform he arrived at the home of his immediate superior, Reggie Vance, and was promptly gobbled up by Reggie's avid sister-in-law. Under her enthusiastic management he received a God-sent opportunity to turn down all but the choicest invitations. His excellent horsemanship and his taste in dress satisfied the male faction of his new acquaintance. Women could find no more perfect ornament for a drawing-room or a box at the opera than this eternally cool, charming, and degagé young man. At the end of his first season Du Maurier had become a fixture.

There were, of course, the bankers, whose opinions did not always coincide with those of their offspring. Some, indeed admired Du Maurier, who reminded them of the debonair gallants of a past generation of wide skirts, bottle sleeves, and bright eyes twinkling behind painted fans. Among those of a more practical turn of mind some disparaged his lack of occupation; others—influenced by their women, or else seeing beneath the mark of frivolity a shrewd and agile mind—pointed out profitable openings in steel corporations or railroad syndicates, and priceless op-

portunities in Wall Street. These Du Maurier turned down with a bland smile, and the honest reply that he would rather be idle on a moderate income than hurried and worried on a hundred thousand a year.

Thus he remained sought after and single. Society set aside its usual prying distaste for mystery and admitted with one accord that in Du Maurier it was charming. Du Maurier, perfectly aware of this, continued blithely manufacturing mystery, where no mystery was.

Isabel Rayburn, with whom he was something less of a poseur, had said: "I don't believe there is anything beneath your cloak of darkness. I believe that you wear it as you wear a gardenia, because it is becoming."

Du Maurier had replied non-committally: "I wear it, my love, because it would be immodest not to."

Cecil's comment was simply: "I wish you wouldn't pose so, Du Maurier."

But Susie Burnham told him: "I like you because you're so different. I feel it would take me years and years, perhaps forever, to know all about you. You're such a mysterious person, Du Maurier. And I . . . I just love mystery."

"That's fine," he responded, overlooking the obvious opening. "Now I'll know enough to send you Conan Doyle instead of, say, Cabell."

"Yes . . . I love reading," Susie assented after a pause, not quite able to see how the conversation had turned to literature. She knew nothing of the great Virginian satirist, little enough of Conan Doyle, either, for this was some months before Sir Arthur's visit to America thrust his name before the public in letters of ectoplasm. "Books are so companionable." And Susie, feeling that the comely Du Maurier had deliberately taken advantage of her ignorance, resolved to visit Brentano's in the near future.

Characteristically, for she was intensely adaptable, Susie did visit Brentano's, where she purchased *Figures of*

Earth and enough literature to familiarize her with the clever Mr. Sherlock Holmes and the admiring Doctor Watson.

Subsequently she embarked upon a more catholic course of reading; for Du Maurier seemed never to tire of allusions.

ON THE morning of Isabel's destruction of the statue, and Cyril Harcourt's amazing revelation to Cecil, Richard Du Maurier said: "Susannah, you're a designing minx." She looked properly injured, and he conceded promptly: "More of a Lizzie Greystock than a Becky Sharp, to be sure."

Susie, having a bowing acquaintance with the latter, inquired mournfully: "Who's Lizzie Greystock?"

"A charming naughty little woman invented by a gentleman named Trollope."

"And what did she do?"

"For a long time she got what she wanted by crying for it," said Du Maurier. "Furthermore, she stole a girl's true lover, and a necklace of diamonds . . . And ended, after losing both, by marrying a rather oily chap called Emilius. I imagine they were as happy as most couples, although it must have been hard for little Lizzie when she thought of past glories."

Susie, wavering between sympathy and scorn, murmured, "And why am I like her, please?"

"Because she was a designing minx. And you're a designing minx. Because neither of you have the least vestige of a conscience, and because you are just as cunning as Lizzie, and much prettier."

"But," contradicted Susie, "I'm not designing, Du Maurier."

"At all events, you're a minx, an adorable minx."

An unprecedented dimple showed itself in the corner of Susie's mouth. "I don't know what a minx is," she exclaimed mischievously, "excepting, of course, the kind of minks they use in the kind of cape my father won't buy me."

"Dear infant, don't say there's anything your father won't buy for you, even when you weep à la Lizzie."

So rapid was the change from mirth to pathos and an air of injured innocence that a critical observer might have doubted the depth of either emotion. Du Maurier, who was clever as well as critical, saw that there was honest high tragedy grief in Susie's face.

"Oh, I don't know what's happened to my father," she whispered. "He used to be so sweet and generous. And now—he's closed my accounts at three stores; he won't let me get any new jewelry; why, he's even forbidden me to buy another hat."

"It strikes me," suggested Du Maurier, who, like most men, preferred the role of comforted to the role of comforter, "that you already have a vast number of hats."

"Nonsense," said Susie with unwonted sharpness—and at once perceived the blunder. "I haven't anything else," she wailed. "Just clothes and jewels and food . . . all empty material things. They're all I have, and now they're taking even those away. Oh, nobody understands me. Nobody cares for me. I haven't any . . . any . . . any . . . thing . . ."

The last few syllables were interspersed with soblike catches at her breath. Susie hesitated, then turned upon Du Maurier eyes moist and brown, eyes helpless and inviting. Whereupon Du Maurier, flesh of Adam, and, worse still, of Eve, said what was expected of him.

"You have me, my dear, if that counts at all," said Du Maurier, and afterwards, although it was against his rules to kiss before luncheon, he bent down and pressed his lips against Susie's poppy red mouth.

After a dreamy and delicious silence, Du Maurier said: "A penny for your thoughts?"

"I was thinking," replied Susie Burnham, "that it was really horrid of father to forbid my having the hat. After all, what can forty-five dollars mean to him?"

To which question, for all his ready wit, Du Maurier could not reply.



Chapter Eleven

ANOTHER hour had been broken upon the wheel of time.

Richard Du Maurier, his mind awl with a hazy confusion of warm red lips and soft red hair, strolled across Fiftieth Street, and down Fifth Avenue toward a justly famous florist shop.

At the top of a broad staircase, in a sweet scented narcotic gloom, he was greeted by the presiding spirit, in that particular, semi-familiar tone reserved for customers of long standing who are prompt about paying their bills. In the green shaded silence that casual voice sounded almost oracular. "The gardenias," it said, "are very nice today. I've put a pair of good big ones aside for you."

And immediately, irritated by the placid expectation of the words, Du Maurier replied negatively: "That was kind of you, but I'm going to cut out gardenias. I want—let me see—a carnation, I think. Yes, a dark red carnation." Irrelevantly a picture of Isabel came into Du Maurier's mind, and with a wholly unusual sense of guilt, a shame that changed to positive annoyance at sight of the presiding spirit's amazement, he added languidly, "Gardenias are so perishable, so very perishable. Really, the best of them are hardly good for an evening . . ."

"A camelia, then. Oh, a camelia," the presiding spirit was intoning. For the first time in his life Du Maurier was aware of the flippancy, the uselessness, of giving such serious attention to people's corsages and boutonnières. "Red carnations, my dear sir, are simply . . . and besides, people are so used to seeing you with a gardenia that . . ."

"Damn the people," said Du Maurier with a violence so contrasting with his usual languor that the very shadows seemed to quiver with shock. "I know what I want . . ."

Yet, even as he spoke, doubt assailed him. Did he know what he wanted? Did anyone know what they wanted? And was not, in this simple query, contained that ineffable truth for which artists and philosophers had sought for thousands of years in vain?

No answer presented itself. Smiling in a kind of self-directed irony, Du Maurier drew the red carnation into his buttonhole, and with a shrug at futile ponderings, went out into the street. . . .

LUNCHEON that day started by being a silent and gloomy meal for Susie and her mother. Mrs. Burnham, who had arrived just as Du Maurier was leaving, had been foolish enough to censure a certain person's idleness; she and Susie had quarreled furiously until the arrival of the postman with a letter mailed in Philadelphia united them in a sullen protest against Isaac's high-handedness.

Olive, her face and faded hair forming a white smudge between the dark of her gown and the dark of the paneled woodwork, sat rigidly still, her elbows planted belligerently upon the tablecloth. Susie, her negligée a green flame which licked her shoulders and left them white as ashes, went mechanically about the business of eating. Occasional tears splashed down her face and lay quivering upon the lamb chop before her, with which they were presently eaten, thus illustrating the natural law that all must return whence it came.

Barbara, tiptoeing lest an unwary movement should fire the heavy atmosphere, addressed Maggie, the cook. "Poor creature," she whispered. "The governor's after pestering her again. T'aint fair. So help me if it ain't!"

"Gammon," grunted Maggie.

Barbara, startled by the verbal eruption, gasped, "Do hush!"

But Maggie, stubbornly stirring batter with a wooden ladle, continued in an audible voice: "She's lacking in a knowledge of what Father Paul calls relective values. And it's all one who hears me say it."

"She's a heart of gold," protested

Barbara, her pink cheeks growing pinker.

"Heart o' lettuce!"

"Blessed if she didn't give me that hat she went and bought only two weeks since," Barbara produced in proud evidence. "And now the governor won't buy her another—and him with a million in the bank, they say."

Maggie sputtered convulsively, and her three chins wobbled. "He may have a million in the bank, but sure the devil'll turn Christian before you get any of it. All I know is that my wages is three months in the rears, and an egg in the hand is worth two birds in the bush, as my ma used to tell me."

"Maybe," said Barbara pertly, "your ma also telled you that you can't make a sow's ear out of a silk purse."

And Barbara, tossing her pretty head—although her own wages were long overdue—pushed through the swinging door into the dining-room, where she tried in vain to read upside down the letter stamped with the name of Burnham and Levy. Just as Barbara was leaving the room, the storm cloud burst.

"That caps the climax!" Susie pointed to the end of Isaac's letter, in the postscript to which he mentioned the probability of a prolonged visit to the metropolis, since, owing to unforeseen circumstances, he was planning to shut down his New York office.

"It's a stall," snarled Olive, and immediately bit her tongue with mortification, for she was by nature the type of woman who prefers to call a dress a frock, a leg a limb, and a thunder-shower an electrical storm.

"I can't dope him at all." Susie picked up the letter, as though constant perusal might impress facts upon a mind accustomed to evading all unpleasant issues. "I think his methods are about as clear as mud. That's what I think." She tore the letter fiercely across, scattering fragments everywhere. "Does he expect us to go naked—or wear last year's clothes?"

"I wish you would mind your language, Susie. Can't you say nude in-

stead of naked?" admonished Olive, carefully collecting the scraps of her husband's letter and placing them in her salad plate. "Besides, there's nothing to be done until we see him. Which, I am sorry to say, will be soon."

Barbara returned with the demitasses. The conversation was closed, with irritation evident on all sides.

"I have a fitting uptown at three, and Isabel's coming back to tea," Susie announced, having subdued her vexed spirit. "Come on in and help me decide what to wear tonight. Gee, it makes me sick. Bertie's seen every dress I own."

Mrs. Burnham seized upon the opportunity to relieve herself by resuming their former argument. "I am delighted," she said, "to hear that you do not intend spending all your time with the lazy intellectual you picked up in the theatre."

Susie made an about face which would have done credit to a veteran of the World War. "Mother! If you mean Du Maurier—you know Isabel intro—" hairpins flew about and tinkled on the hardwood floor.

"Very well, Susie." Mrs. Burnham followed her daughter into her daughter's room, and cautiously shut the door in Barbara's face. "Let us say that you were properly presented to this handsome viper by your Greenwich Village friend." She favored her daughter with a withering glance, but Susie, uninjured continued to polish her hair with an enormous monogrammed brush. "That doesn't give him enough money to support you, you extravagant child," continued Olive provocatively. "And this is certainly the last time for you to pursue—er—fruitless intimacies."

Susie, now at the stage of smearing her pink face with thick white cream, responded almost absently. "Of course, I realize that you're anxious to get me out of the way, married, and off Daddy's hands. Of course, I realize that in that case there'd be more in it—for you." And she looked up, awaiting the certain animosity of the reply.

But Olive Burnham's anger had col-



"With numb fingers Isabel replaced the jeweled pins"

lapsed like a pricked windbag. When next she spoke a change had come into her voice, a curious change, so that it seemed to be an echo of the voice which must have been hers at twenty. "Suey, my girl," Olive whispered, "don't say that, please. Suey, you know it's not true. You know I love my baby better than anything. But you're not a child any more. Two years and you'll be twenty-five. And women get old so soon." Olive's eyes, turned inward and backward, might have been looking upon the girl that had been Olive at twenty, a slender girl, with a glory of golden hair, and lips hungry for life. "Your chances," Olive continued in a firmer tone, "don't get better. You're

seen around too much. But I can't stop that, though God knows I've tried to. It's time for you to marry, and marry well. It's no time for you to keep company like a third-grade parlor-maid."

If there was one thing to crystallize Susie's affection for Du Maurier, it was her mother's opposition. "Now, mother," she began, "don't let's start all over. I like Du Maurier, I like him a lot. I'll marry anyone I want."

"If your father lost his money"—an agony of tears unshed for many years, years filled with bitterness and disillusion, strangled the unborn sentence. "If your father lost his money—"

Olive's daughter laughed. "That



wouldn't matter. Why, I'd slave for a man I loved, mother."

"I thought that once," said Olive.

Susie, startled by the tone of her mother's speech, looked up. There were tears, bright as diamonds, on her mother's lashes. "Oh, cheer up, mom," cried Susie, rushing over to present her mother with a creamy kiss, "everything's going to be all right." After which she proceeded to remove the grease from her face with an embroidered guest towel.

Olive, motionless on the bed, made no answer. She was still brooding upon the past, wishing, perhaps, in the manner of people who have reached the fruit upon high branches, and found

it bitter to the core, that she could live her life again.

"Come on, mom," Susie was crying, "Give us a laugh!"

Slowly Olive looked up. Susie, delighted, waved the towel at her, then dropped it on the floor. Transfigured, catlike, Olive pounced upon it, shaking it in Susie's face.

"Susannah," screamed Olive, "you've been wiping your dirty face on my show-towel. Oh, you miserable little wretch! Slave for a man, would you? Not if you knew it. But you'd let anyone slave for you. What do you think I spend my morning cutting up gauze for? So you can rub your old cold-cream into my best towels? You ought to be thrash-

ed! You ought to be horse-whipped!" And so on, on, and on, until little Susie, flinging her fur coat about her with a despairing gesture, rushed from the scene, crying:

"You're a nasty old thing, and it would serve you right if I got run over and never came back. . . ."

SUSIE DID not get run over, but arrived safely at the Plaza, where Isabel was waiting.

"Do hurry, darling," exclaimed Susie, as she rushed up and seized her friend's hands. "We're most horribly late, and I have a million things to do." Not until they reached the street, and turned south, did she add, "I just adore meeting you, Isabel. You're so prompt. Besides, you don't scold me if I'm not."

Isabel smiled at the very idea of such an ingenuous person deliberately scheming to "vamp a man away."

"It's all right, Susie," she said reassuringly, "what on earth kept you?"

"Mother—mother, of course." They reached Fifty-seventh Street just as the traffic signal changed from red to green. Isabel pulled Susie back from the front wheels of an advancing bus, in time to hear her complain bitterly: "I think it's perfectly disgusting the way they treat pedestrians. They give the automobile all the chance." And Isabel, having heard Susie remark exactly the reverse when she was driving, laughed.

"You're always quarreling with your mother. What was it this time?"

"You don't know how horrid she can be. She always puts up a front when you're there. She called Du Maurier—"

The lights in the tower flicked from green to red; red to yellow.

Susie and Isabel dashed across with the crowd, swung westward; the large plate glass doors of an expensive establishment opened to receive them. The subject of Du Maurier—absorbing to both of them—was thrust into the background while they reviewed a pageant of velvet toques drooping with paradise, twisted metal cloth turbans, and charming bell shapes just in from Paris.

A tall white-haired man with a red necktie and an authoritative manner sent people flying to get a buckram shape, which would eventually be covered with velvet and adorned with Mrs. Burnham's aigrettes. In the expectant calm Susie asked Isabel whether she had seen Du Maurier.

"Not since Saturday night." To compensate for the hurt to her pride, Isabel supplemented, "I've been terribly busy."

"I'll bet he's called you up a dozen times, hasn't he?"

"Have you seen him?" Isabel countered.

"Oh yes, he's the sweetest thing, my dear, just as nice as you said he was. Only this morning he—but this is ridiculous! What I wanted to ask you was—please be truthful, darling,—are you in love with Du Maurier? Or are you just good pals? Because, you see, I simply have to know."

Isabel heard herself replying, "What utter nonsense! I'm much too busy working to be in love with Dick or anybody else." She interrupted herself in order to secure a soft blue turban. "Isn't this lovely, Susie? It's just my color." And Isabel began to remove the long diamond and sapphire pins from her own hat. "Why did you have to know?"

"It is a lovely color. You don't mind if I try it on while you're taking off your hat? I had to know because if you had been in love with him—you see, Isabel darling, whatever faults I have, I have one virtue too—fairness. And if you were in love with him, why he must know it. And if he knew it, why he had no business making love to me." She gave the blue hat a fierce little tug, and regarded herself in the mirror with a widening smile. "Isn't it lovely? It might have been designed for me. I'll just wear it right out." She added, as an afterthought, "You didn't want it anyway, did you?"

"Of course not. I really don't want any."

"I knew you didn't. You aren't weak, the way I am, about these things. Well, now that we've settled that, we

can get back to Richard. I'm so relieved, Isabel. You're an angel. Nobody else understands me at all."

With numb fingers Isabel replaced the jeweled pins. She was conscious of the suspicious scrutiny of Susie's shrewd brown eyes. She ought to say something, something natural, disarming; but her mouth felt like a leather strap on a wooden face. When she tried to smile the lips twitched uncontrollably. She felt sure that she looked like a comprachico. Finally. "Tell me . . . more about it," she said. And as soon as she had spoken, her taut muscles relaxed as if an invisible spring had released them.

"I could tell you a thousand things," Susie assured her. "He is just about the perfectest bit of perfection God ever made, isn't he?"

"I don't think so, but then . . . then. I'm not in love with him, or he with me."

"I should kill myself if he were!" Susie confessed. "I can say that now. He's been so nice to me. His consideration is positively touching. He's even stopped wearing a gardenia, because I don't like the scent. He wears those lovely dark red carnations, now. You know, the dyed ones. I like to see art improving upon nature," she added brightly. "Oscar Wilde said that, didn't he?"

Isabel never knew what she answered. She knew only the pound-pounding of her blood in her veins and arteries, in a thousand little pulses all over her body. She was carried back to a day in March.

A day of cold invigorating winds, and nascent buds. She saw herself, her hand pillowed in the crook of Du Maurier's arm, emerging from an art gallery on Fifth Avenue, where there had been an exhibit of Aubrey Beardsley's work. They talked of Wilde. Du Maurier said: "Salomé is an erotic masterpiece; De Profundis is a philosophic masterpiece; the fairy tales are each an artistic triumph. The rest of Wilde. . . ." Du Maurier looked down at her, and smiled one of his rare, deprecating smiles. . . .

A girl arrived bearing the buckram

shape, and Susie was forced back to trivial remarks, which was fortunate for Isabel.

"You see," Susie said, "I have to make myself beautiful for him. I have so little, Isabel, and the more I get, the less it seems I have. He's all that really matters to this poor, poor little rich girl. Will you help me, Isabel?"

"I'll try." And Isabel, trapped, rose abruptly, mumbled some sort of an excuse, and got out of the stifling sweetness of that unforgettable place. "And I will try," she promised herself fiercely.

AS SHE rode down through the light-pricked mauve of the winter evening it was with a heart hardened against her own grief, and a mind filled with stubborn resolve. After all, Isabel reflected, the sources of happiness were within rather than without; the sources of happiness were not measured by the capacity of suffering and reaction to outside stimuli, but by the difficulty of filling the gaps left by a larcenous fate. "I have plenty of resources," Isabel thought. "I have my work, I have my father to look after, I have Cecil; I have the satisfaction of a double loyalty, to my friendship with Susie, to my own convictions of right and wrong. I will not see Du Maurier again."

The bus lurched on through the cool grey evening. Atop Madison Square Garden the figure of Diana seemed to move blackly across a fading sky. Through the columns beneath showed pale lozenges of color. The Metropolitan tower, its steeple still faintly gilded by the reflected splendor of a day that was no more, blotted it from view, itself fell into the distance. Behind and before, the strong golden lights of Fifth Avenue looped and garlanded away into eternity.

A sudden overwhelming perception of the beauty of sacrifice lifted Isabel upon invisible wings, so that she felt herself soaring far above a city of passion and pettiness, a city of greed. Beauty, enfolding her, wrapped her in peace.

Chapter Twelve

FROM Anastasie Isabel learned that her sister had gone with Potter to dine at Giuseppe Cappel's restaurant on Thirty-ninth Street. There was a message, the maid informed her, left with Monsieur le Capitaine. Adrian greeted his daughter with a brief nod and the grin of a gargoyle. "I hope you haven't just decided never to see your young man again," he volunteered, with his peculiar characteristic of hitting the nail on the head, and Isabel in a tenderer spot, "because he called this afternoon and announced his intention of coming back tonight."

"Because Susie has another engagement," Isabel thought. "Oh, Lord!"

Adrian's grin broadened into a leer. "He's so anxious to see the *Orpheus and Eurydice*," Adrian observed.

"To see the noblest work I've ever done?"

"It really is, you know. Nowadays any damn fool can create a masterpiece, but it takes a genius to destroy one."

Isabel's immediate problem was whether or not to receive Du Maurier that night. She would, of course; but so strange is human nature that it was necessary to pass through a vast amount of preliminary logic to reach a conclusion actually as plain as the nose on her face. Thus, then, did she set about justifying the refutation of her decision: Firstly, moving as they did, in the same small circle, she and Du Maurier would be bound to meet; and since she had protested casual friendship to Susie, would it not be better in every way, more sporting, more salutary for her pride to keep up the pretense before Du Maurier?

Her duty was plain. She must receive Du Maurier as though nothing had happened. She must evade the subject of the *Orpheus and Eurydice*, and conceal its destruction. Here was no noble sacrifice, but a sordid necessity. A hard unprofitable rôle, from which even the acrid sweetness of martyrdom was barred.

No sooner had this thought crossed her mind than her instincts revolted against it. She had the impulse to deck and adorn herself for the event. The madness of sacrifice was upon her once more.

HER DRESS was black velvet, sleeveless, cut round and close at the neck. Her shoes were black, with high red leather heels, like those of the little French marquise whose feet would not stop dancing even when she ascended the guillotine.

She danced a few steps. She looked at her bare arms in the mirror. She felt with her hands the silken thickness of her hair. She was seized by an inspired recklessness.

In the studio there was one panel which was a safe. In it was a locked black box, filled with jewels belonging to women now dead, to Adrian's wife and Adrian's mistresses.

"Give me the key, papa."

Adrian showed no surprise as she burst into his room holding the box in trembling hands. "Bring me the box. Put it here on my bed."

It was open. Clinking, the jewels tumbled across the knees of the brown, distorted man. A ring, round and golden, rolled out upon a leopard skin and lay neglected. It was Helena's wedding ring.

Without speaking Adrian watched his daughter.

Diamonds of the old mine cut, white and blue, unlike the diamonds of to-day, gleaming only dully when the light crossed them. . . . Rich rubies, still, after years in their swathings of cotton, hot and red as tiny chalices filled with blood. . . . These belonged to a woman Adrian had known before he married Helena. A Spanish girl with wonderful arms, whose name was Maria Dolorosa. . . . Pearls, large and white and lusterless. Helena's pearls. . . . And the star of diamonds which Vera Metchnikoff had sent back without a word on Adrian's wedding day. . . .

Adrian watched his daughter as she adorned herself. As she put on the

many rings, more and ever more, until her hands were heavy with dull white diamonds; the many bracelets, until her arms were cut with crimson bands, crimson welts like the welts made by a long whip; the diamond star pinned over her left breast; the long uneven string of pearls which had lost their lustre. Then, as she twisted the pearls about her throat Adrian spoke:

"Take them off. My God, they're dead! They make you look like a mummy."

Reality, amazing instant of reality.

"I'm being a fool," Isabel said aloud. "I'll go into the studio and put this—this stuff—away. I wish I'd never touched it."

She came to his bed to take the box. His hand closed upon her arm. "You're so—female. Isabel. You'll never give him up."

"I will! I will! I'll send him away to-night!" And stumbling, defiant, she went from the room.

She stood beside the table in the studio. She had taken off the diamond star. She had taken off the pearls. They lay cold and lusterless, curling like thick white worms over the old box. She loathed them; with a personal and indescribable hatred she loathed them. In the lamplight she looked at her hands and her arms. Only the rubies had kept their color, the rubies that were red as wine, red as the summer sun, red as red blood.

"I'm like a ruby," Isabel thought. "In high temperature they change color . . . turn green. I shall have to cool off and become natural. That is what rubies do. . . ."

She became conscious of a sound of knocking, took herself in hand. She knew that Du Maurier had come. She could see him standing there outside of her consciousness, see the look on his face. She knew that he was stirred, unmasked for a moment.

"Hello, there," she called. "Throw your coat anywhere."

His face closed up. The mask slid back into place. But beneath it he seethed with a new knowledge. "She

is a woman! Isabel is a woman! Not an artist. Never, never, the creator of statues! A woman, a creator of man."

"You have come to see the Orpheus," she cried.

He had come to see her—for the first time—to see the woman.

"I'll show it to you presently, when I get rid of this junk." Ridiculous banalities. "What have you been doing with yourself, old man?"

He watched the red welts of rubies on her white arms, like the marks of a whip. "Who has been hurting her?" he asked himself, and wondered if he was going mad. But—"Don't take them off, they're wonderful!" he said. He watched her arms. Marks of a whip. Marks of suffering. The jeweled bracelets which adorn eternal woman.

"I must take them off!"

She would not let him see her. She would not let him continue to look with eager eyes upon her stark womanhood. Stripping away the jewels like red fire she threw them in the box, shut the black lid upon them.

"You came to see the Orpheus?"

"Yes. I came to see it. Is it finished?"

"Quite—finished."

The arm, all white now, reached to a cover over a wooden stand. The cover was gone.

Man and woman were gone.

Artist and critic faced each other over the wreck of clay.

ISABEL was alone when Cecil and Potter returned to the studio.

"Oh, we had such a priceless adventure!" Cecil announced hilariously. "We ate at Giuseppe's, and then went to the Rialto. And when we got out it was snowing and blowing, and blowing and snowing. So we took a taxi. And when we got to Madison Square we discovered that neither of us had a cent—not even a ruble—"

"And then," Potter interrupted, "this frail descendant of the ancient and prolific tribe of American dumbbells actually had an idea."

"It wasn't really his," Cecil contra-

dicted, you told me yourself, Stockbridge Potter, that you had read it in some magazine or something." Whereupon they started to argue as to whether or not the adoption of an idea was equivalent to its origination and had similar legal rights. The law was on Cecil's side, but Potter spoke faster.

"Well, what finally did happen?" Isabel begged.

"We told him to stop in front of the cigar store in the Flatiron Building—"

"And Stock and I jumped out and Stock said—"

"That I'd dropped a ten spot on the floor of his bloody-black cab, and was going to get a match so's I could look for it."

"And when you came back," Isabel predicted, "the taxi had flew?"

"It had flown," said Potter.

"It had flown," said Cecil.

"Exactly."

"Precisely."

"The moral of which," Potter continued, sitting down on the floor, which he claimed to like for the reason that he never fell down from it, "is that when I drive a taxi some day I won't put any faith in the words of young men who go into cigar stores. No, nor of the young ladies that follow them there."

"Cheer up, you'll never be a taxi driver," observed Cecil, searching about for matches. "Not for more than a day, at any rate."

"Was that a pun?" enquired Potter.

"It sounded like one."

"Why won't I ever drive a taxi for more than and so forth?"

"She's seen you drive," was Isabel's opinion.

Cecil said: "Because you'll have a contretemps with a lamp post and the lamp post will stand its ground. Or else



"Du Maurier watched the red welts of rubies on her white arms."

you'll be hauled into court for manslaughter."

"I daresay he'd be more careful of his own life than he is of other people's," chuckled Isabel, wondering how she could manage to chuckle. "Most men are."

Cecil paused in the midst of lighting her cigarette.

"Did Du Maurier call up by any chance?"

"He was here."

"How'd you ever get rid of him with such admirable despatch?" Potter stretched out his legs and reclined luxuriously, with his head on the tableleg. "I thought he was the original bulldog. What did you do?"

"Did Cecil tell you what happened to the Orpheus this morning?"

"Yump! And I told her that now I knew that Barnum was right."

"Well, I showed it to Dick."

"Oh, my God!" wailed Cecil. "What an awful confession of undying love. Now he'll be more unbearable than ever!" She blew a long wreath of smoke out through her nostrils, crossed shapely knees, glanced covertly at her sister, and resumed the conversation. "What did he say?"

"Oh, he was a perfect beast," cried Isabel, momentarily forgetting her pride and the presence of Potter. "What do you suppose he did say?"

Potter, silent, effaced himself, taking in every word.

Cecil replied quite calmly. "That you were a bigger fool than he thought you were. That a fine statue belonged to the world and not to you. That you had no right to destroy it, and that you made him sick."

Isabel stared. "Well," she said at last. "You're one peach of a character judge. I'll grant that. It's just what he did say, only there was more of it and—"

"It was tied up in flowers."

"Hardly," said Isabel, with an expression of one who has tasted a lemon. She saw Potter, became aware of his keen glance, changed the subject. "How were things at the office today? Any news?"

"Yes," said Cecil lightly. "Veronica French, the poor fish, dropped a paltry little ten thousand." But Cecil did not mention the name of the firm where the ten thousand had been "dropped." Already the office, that curiously detached series of events which filled her days, had passed from her mind.

Instead, as if in a glass, Cecil saw Isabel bitterly stricken by a grief which, of all griefs the greatest, was alone incomprehensible to that Cecil who had never loved a man.

"Yes," said Potter, lazily lifting himself from the floor, "Barnum sure was right. Goodnight, young ladies."



Chapter Thirteen

AN OLD-fashioned fire of cannel coal burning in an iron grate threw a tangerine colored glow about a room in the west Fifties. It was a good room, thickly curtained in faded damask, with an alcove at one end containing a big soft bed and a quaint chest of drawers which must have secreted silks, brocades, and wired laces in the days of Good Queen Anne. Close to the fire a chair was drawn, and on the hearth lay a wire-haired fox terrier, nose rested tentatively between placid paws.

The door opened.

The terrier awoke sniffing, yelping, helplessly rolling with delight. Richard Du Maurier, strolling toward the fireplace was instantly surrounded by one joyful dog, who seemed to occupy the space, to make the noise, of a thousand gratified pups.

"Good evening, Achilles," said Du Maurier gravely, grasping his roommate in the middle and swinging him aloft. Achilles stretched an eagerly experimental tongue toward his master's ear, which miraculously shot away to an unattainable height. Returned to his rug Achilles curled up and went promptly back to sleep.

Du Maurier proceeded to remove his overcoat, his jacket, and his vest. Donning a dressing-gown of badly worn

blue velvet, he went to the big paper-littered desk in the corner. There he switched on a powerful modern reading light, and produced pen, ink and a writing tablet.

Before settling to a task of obvious importance, Du Maurier made a complacent survey of the room. Everything was as it should be: the fire glowed, the dog slept, the bed was turned back, the shades were drawn, the telephone in the corner was switched off. The landlady below, if anyone chanced to ask for Mr. Richard Du Maurier, would never think of associating him with the gentleman who had occupied the third floor rear for the past four years. The few people who were party to his secret were safe as mutes. In fact, Du Maurier concluded, he was secure as a monk in a cell.

When he had written a few pages, Du Maurier said aloud: "This will make an excellent beginning for chapter nine," after which he proceeded to cross out every word, put another word in its place, and then, crossing out the new words, replace the old ones, slightly transposed. This singular game continued for about an hour. Subsequently he tore the sheet into a number of small geometric patterns, and, crumpling them in his hand, consigned them verbally to the devil, and actually to the scrap-basket.

Then he arose disconsolately, tumbled into the arm chair, and stirred with his toe the well-covered ribs of the terrier, who rolled over on his back and blinked, so it seemed to Du Maurier, with a mocking and secretive wisdom.

"It's a poor sort of life we're leading, Achilles," said he. "It used to be good, but it's getting pretty poor. We don't enjoy being selfish any more, Achilles, because it hurts—here—" and Du Maurier laid a long forefinger in the place where hearts are supposed to be, and where no actual heart ever was.

For some time after this Du Maurier was silent, while Achilles, coldly sympathetic, came a little closer, crawling on his belly in a manner which God

ordained only for snakes, but which dogs often successfully emulate.

"We'd make a pretty poor husband, wouldn't we, Achilles?" asked Du Maurier. And, as the dog appeared to nod somewhat contemptuously, his master made haste to add: "Of course, Achilles, we mean to stick to our resolution, and never be a husband at all. From now on we shall be strictly immoral, Achilles. We shall remember that we are an author and have a public to satisfy, an elaborate mystery to maintain. And in the future we will regard pretty girls as so much raw material, nothing else. Does that suit your canine majesty?"

Evidently it did, for his canine majesty snored sonorously.

And Du Maurier sat still, brooding and dreaming, until the fire turned from deep orange to pallid blue, and darkness settled like a fog upon the silent room.



Chapter Fourteen

THE BIRTHDAY of that One to whom Du Maurier frequently referred as "The Divine Optimist," drew rapidly near. The world, which had in turn crucified and deified him, made ready to celebrate his nativity.

Cyril Harcourt belonged to the genial old set which regarded Christmas Eve as a fitting and proper time for family reunions. His house near the Metropolitan Museum boasted a lofty English living hall, with an oak-raftered ceiling, and a capacious stone fireplace. In the days antedating the fame of Freud, Ford, and Henri Matisse, this room had been the scene of many merry gatherings, and Mr. Harcourt, frequently afflicted with loneliness and a kind of retrospective melancholy, liked this one night a year to refill his home with laughter and dancing feet.

Every year Veronica French and her two nieces were invited to partake of a mighty dinner, and to help decorate the spreading evergreen with bright baubles and gifts wrapped in scarlet. Adrian,

too, was invited, but he always refused, not so much because of the difficulty of transporting his paralyzed body, as because he preferred to be alone.

This year, as though Adrian's surly negative were not enough, Isabel announced that she was not going either.

"You and Aunt Veronica will have to support the family honor between you," she told Cecil. "I don't fancy you'll sink under the burden."

Cecil stared. "Not going? Why, what nonsense! Of course you're going."

"I'm not."

"Why?"

"For one thing I've told Anastasie to take the night off, and I won't leave papa here alone—in his condition."

This excuse, though not convincing, was valid enough, since Adrian had recently startled his daughters by having hysterics at six in the morning when a stray white kitten, battered and soiled, wandered in through the open French windows, and sat down at the foot of the Captain's bed.

There was nothing to do, Doctor Schlegel informed them. They could not make him stop drinking; owing to the curious condition of his body, physical activity was even more dangerous than alcohol. He could predict no more pleasant future for his disagreeable patient than delirium tremens, and eventually death.

Still: "We can always get a woman to come in," said Cecil, who knew perfectly well that Isabel's reasons for refusing had nothing to do with her father. "Besides, his bell rings in the janitress' room."

"I'm not going," Isabel replied, sharply, "and that settles it."

"Have you another engagement?"

Isabel met Cecil's gaze squarely. "Certainly not. I shall work on the figure of Sappho, finish it perhaps."

Cecil answered stiffly, "Suit yourself. But it's beastly for C. H. He won't know what's up."

"You can make it all right if you

will," said Isabel, and her pleading voice softened Cecil, who responded:

"I'll try."

But on Christmas Eve, as she wrapped her cloak about her, Cecil broke out rebelliously, "You're a little fool." For Du Maurier had not so much as telephoned. "I wouldn't make myself that miserable for any man."

Isabel's eyes swept somewhat contemptuously over the smooth expanse of bare shoulder which showed above her sister's wrap. Then quickly she looked down at her own rough smock. "After all," said Isabel, deliberately choosing to misunderstand, "it's my father."

"The deuce it is," Cecil flung back, and went out slamming the door.

Isabel picked up a lump of clay and began rolling it between her fingers. But she was too restless to work. She went in and sat down near Adrian's bed.

"Go away." He glanced up with a look almost apprehensive. "I want to be alone."

"Oh, papa," Isabel's face clouded. "On Christmas Eve? Why, it's the one night of the year when you ought to feel convivial and friendly. Besides, I stayed home to be near you, so you must let me."

Adrian did not smile. He was no longer susceptible to flattery.

"We'll pass over that lie," he said, "because I suppose it's for your own vanity's sake, as well as mine. But, as for Christmas Eve being a night of joy," his lip curled back for an instant, baring sharp white teeth, "it is meet and fitting that man should celebrate the birth of the one whom they tortured to death upon Calvary. But why with joy? Why not with black vestments and minor melodies . . . funereal moanings to commemorate one who was born in a manger and who died upon a cross?"

"But, papa," exclaimed Isabel, quite forgetting her agnostic principles in her indignation at Adrian's blasphemous tone. "But, papa, what an

awful attitude. It is because He brought so much light and beauty to the world that we celebrate, not because. . . ."

"Surely you aren't going to tell me He was the salvation of mankind," cried Adrian with a sardonic grimace. "You, who have always claimed to be an atheist! Young as you are, you've seen enough of man to know that he is unsaved . . . not worth saving, perhaps. No, Isabel, it is not fitting to be joyous in memory of Christ. There is irony enough in the memory of the crimes of rack and wheel and war that have been perpetrated in the name of that gentle philosopher who preached of peace and brotherly love. No, you celebrate because of the custom, not the cause. Moreover," Adrian paused for a moment, "moreover, you see only the pleasant side of Christmas Eve. You know only the agreeable symbols of gift giving and taper lighting and wreath hanging and surreptitious kissing with a sprig of mistletoe for excuse. The quaint beliefs and customs which once made Christmas Eve excitingly and entertainingly sinister seem to have been quite forgotten in this super-civilized corner of the earth."

Isabel smiled rather indulgently. "I can't imagine Christmas being sinister."

"A year ago," Adrian reminded her, "you couldn't imagine Christmas being lonesome or sad. Yet here you are, home alone and wretched because of a stupid clinging to the belief that a man for whom you care will choose to surprise you with a call on Christmas Eve. Now, in that very event there are sinister possibilities. Your hunting instinct is aroused. Red magic has been set to work."

"I'm afraid I shan't know how to manage it," Isabel responded, laughing. "Perhaps if you tell me some of these charmingly sinister matters of which you seem to know so much it will help. Perhaps something exciting will happen." Isabel, who hoped that by being immensely and jocularly incredulous she might stifle the remote

stirrings of dread, added: "I should simply adore a supernatural experience. It would be such a distinction."

It seemed to her that her father looked very queerly at her. But he merely nodded his head, and said: "Perhaps. Perhaps. I have seen strange things happen on Christmas Eve . . . especially to women." With that he appeared to go into a reverie, forgetting all about Isabel, who grew rather uncomfortable, and almost wished that she had gone with Cecil to Cyril Harcourt's party. "Strange things—" Adrian murmured — and again, "Strange things. . . ."

Once more Isabel perceived for an instant that occult connecting link between her father's strange dark thoughts and her own experiences. It was as though some unmentionable possibility were being suggested to her mind; as though her mind, revolting, still could not entirely shut away this unknown thing. She had a vivid brief picture of her mind, a delicate and fastidious thing, grappling and being strangled by the large thick coils of Adrian's impenetrable thoughts. Then Adrian awoke from his reverie and barked at her: "I thought I told you I wanted to be alone."

She stood up, her nerves jangling from the sudden shock of sound.

"Give me a drink, and get out. My lungs are still good, oddly enough. I'll call if I want you. Give me a drink, and go."

"Papa, you promised to cut down."

"The hell I did. Get me a drink, Isabel, and be quick about it. You'll have to in the long run, you know. Because, if you don't get it for me I'll get it for myself, and even that damned Dutchman that calls himself a doctor admits that walking will kill me quicker than drinking."

Afterwards: "Don't mind me, youngster," Adrian half apologized. He ran his tongue slowly across the edge of the glass, as if this faint savor of whiskey were some rare sensual delight. "This is one of my bad nights, worse luck for you. Run along into the

studio, and wait for your lover to call. . . ."

"That is not likely to happen. . . ."

"It is Christmas Eve," Adrian answered, sipping delicately, "Almost anything is likely to happen."

"Anything but that. . . ." Isabel thought, as she went into the studio and resolutely addressed the statue of Sappho, finished except for a few small touches. Small, important touches — gradually they drew her attention away from the silent telephone, so that it was ten o'clock before she stood up, rubbed the sticky green mud from her hands, and she realized that her work was done. And: "Anything but that," she repeated. "For he won't come now."

Slowly she stripped off the rough blue smock, and stood there, a slender figure in a slip of soft gold-colored stuff, sighing for that gay spirit of Christmas which had spread like an infectious disease to which she alone seemed immune. After a time she took up a book which lay on the table, but it was a book which reminded her of many far off things, so that she sat, alternately reading and musing, until the clock struck again and left a deeper silence behind its ringing call. Then she put the book away, and turned down the lights.

The room was dark, save where the light from Adrian's doorway painted a pale rectangle on the floor. It was snowing; flakes blurred against the pane, alive for a moment in crystalline beauty, then gone. And Isabel felt sorry for their short-lived beauty; so sorry that her throat tightened; so sorry that she turned away from the window, groping about the room until she found a chair. There she sat with her hands over her face, while hot salty tears trickled like white blood between her fingers. There she sat until the clock struck midnight, when she raised her head and knew it was Christmas Day.

And, in that same instant, she heard a sound behind her, and, turning, saw the studio door swing slowly open. . . .

Chapter Fifteen

"O H-H-H . . . drifting along with the ti-i-ide. . . ." *Buzz. Buzz.* "Da - de - da - deee, da - deeeeee, da-dee-eeee. . . ." *Buzz. Buzz.* "Da-dum-dum. . . ."

"Do you suppose they'll ever stop arriving?" exclaimed Cecil, putting a forefinger into each ear to shut out the conglomeration of bell-ringing, and music, and shouted greeting. "It's past midnight now, and they're still going strong."

"Fashionable tardiness, my dear" said the woman to whom she was speaking. She had Cecil's breezy abruptness of delivery, but the added charm of fine diction, and a low, rather husky voice. "These people are all very fond of Cyr'l. So they get tight before they come over, instead of drinking his-liquor."

Cecil replied trivially, wondering whether there was any thing large or small enough to escape her aunt's somewhat reptilian tongue.

She was not having a thoroughly enjoyable time tonight—poor Cecil. Her mind would keep turning to Isabel's unwarranted absence, and then, over and over, to Mr. Harcourt's shaken head and disappointed smile. She had tried to cheer him as best she could, but her efforts met with small success. The worldly witticisms of Mrs. French seemed more to his liking. Cecil looked carefully at her aunt, and realized for the first time that she did not, that she most definitely did not, care for her.

Mrs. French was a tall woman, slenderly built, but all curves: that rare type of figure which the French call "*fausse maigre*." Her complexion had the bloom and velvet smoothness of twenty summers—twenty summers of skilfully applied creams and judiciously avoided sunlight. Her eyes were large and blue and infinitely expressive, although they did not always mean the things they expressed. Above all her famous silver-white hair was carefully marcelled, with every strand in its proper place, and this, in spite of her

height, gave her the effect of a dainty marchioness stepped down from a Watteau canvas . . . a dainty and very sophisticated marchioness. . . .

She and Cecil were standing together upon the staircase, from which they commanded an excellent view of the room below, where two orchestras played alternately, and eternal couples circled about the lighted Christmas tree. At one end of the room a drift-wood fire blazed cheerily away, and beyond it liveried footmen opened the door again and again to admit bright-faced celebrants and flurries of snow.

"A charming picture, is it not?" said Mr. Harcourt, coming up behind the two women.

"Oh, it's splendid, C. H. Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without it," cried Cecil, simulating an enthusiasm beyond what she felt, in order to make up for the indifference of Mrs. French, who said nothing at all.

Mr. Harcourt flashed Cecil a grateful smile, but it was to her aunt that he turned. "Where are your thoughts, Veronica? Far away, I'll wager."

"Indeed not. There—" Mrs. French swept out her hand toward the dance floor below. The movement drew her black velvet bodice close across her breasts, which, because of her childlessness perhaps, had kept the fresh symmetry of unripe fruit.

"Well, then, what were your thoughts?"

Mrs. French raised her chin provocatively. Her eyes were almost level with his. "I was counting the couples," she answered, "and trying to see just how many of the men I had had affairs with."

Mr. Harcourt blushed.

Then, without any remark, he turned and addressed Cecil.

Mrs. French laughed, quietly and irrelevantly, turned with a consciously graceful movement, and slowly descended the stairs, her black velvet train sweeping behind her. Once she looked back over her shoulder, at Cecil and Cyril Harcourt, and it seemed to the younger woman that there was

something insinuating, something indefinitely mocking and ironic, in that last swift glance.

"My aunt is a great mystery to me at times," said Cecil leaning against the banister.

"A charming mystery."

Cecil lifted her blonde young head. "She talks about her affairs like a woman who has not had any. She loves her past, her flaming past, and flaunts it. She carries her age without dignity."

Mr. Harcourt touched Cecil's arm. "I am astonished. I scarcely thought you capable of such gross injustice. Oh, Cecil. . . . I am very much disappointed!"

"I'm sorry."

There was so much sincere abject regret in her tone that Mr. Harcourt at once forgot his displeasure.

"I wanted more than anything else to help you make a success of this evening," Cecil went on. "For yourself. And now I've been the very opposite of a help."

"Not a bit of it." Mr. Harcourt took her hand in his, touched strangely by her tone. "Why, Cecil, my child, I don't know where I'd be without you to buck me up. You have been my greatest comfort in moments when I am sorely tried." He pressed her hands quickly. "I must go back to my guests, infant, and quickly, or I shall be saying things which I have no right to say—yet—" so with these words he turned and left Cecil, left her with a new warm tingling in her hand and her arm, even in her heart.

Afterwards she stood for a while like one in a dream. Then she tripped lightly up the stairs, separated her wrap from several hundred others, and dashed down again. She wanted suddenly to get back to Isabel, for in her present mood she felt quite competent to pull down the barrier which had recently come between them. That barrier had been a constant trial to Cecil, who knew that Isabel needed her, and was hurt by Isabel's obstinate refusal to accept succor. Moreover the

confidence which had existed all their lives had been broken for the first time. The secret of Isaac Burnham's identity weighed heavily upon Cecil's mind, but Mr. Harcourt had insisted upon a promise of silence, and she put loyalty to her word before loyalty to habit. There was less tangible right on the side of Isabel, who, for a reason unknown even to herself, had said no more about the episode of the jewels than Potter had heard on the night of the incident. As if by some tacit understanding, both Du Maurier and Adrian had kept their own counsel, and as the incident partook more and more the shady quality of memory, it became indescribably woven up with its own significance. It could not be told. Thus, the barrier had widened. But tonight Cecil felt competent to pull it down.

GUESTS were still arriving when she reached the door, where she was greeted by a pair of old acquaintances. After about ten minutes of conversation, the female of the species turned to her husband, and exclaimed: "What's become of Dick?"

"I suppose he's still out in the car," replied her husband. "That's where I left him."

"How perfectly absurd! Bring him in at once!"

"But he doesn't want to come in, dearest."

"Bring him in at once, Horatio."

Shortly afterwards a flushed and triumphant Horatio dragged in a bored and sulky Du Maurier.

"Hello, there—" Cecil made no attempt to conceal the fact that she was more amazed than pleased. "I hardly expected to see you."

"Nor I you," said Du Maurier; and he looked about, Cecil thought, with an air of nervous discomfort. "I didn't mean to come in, only that little beast Horatio made life a burden for me. . . . I say, where's Isabel?"

"At home."

"At home? Why did she leave so early?"

"She hasn't been here." Cecil hesitated, and then went on; in a subtly accusing voice, "She didn't want father to be alone, so she stayed at home."

"How could you let her?" Here the reproach was not subtle. Just like Du Maurier, Cecil thought, to turn the tables adroitly, and place the burden of blame upon her shoulders. "I thought, of course, she'd be at Cyril's party," he continued, "or—"

Cecil flung a barbed dart. "Is that why you wanted to stay out?"

The dart glanced aside upon hidden armor.

"—or I would certainly have gone and stayed with her," Du Maurier concluded. "Poor kid, all by herself the night before Christmas. If you're going back I'll come along."

It seemed to Cecil that he deliberately hastened their departure. She was convinced that for an unknown reason he did not want Cyril Harcourt to see him. In any case, they were soon in a taxi chugging down Fifth Avenue.

"What's the big idea?" Cecil demanded rudely.

Du Maurier made a movement of languid innocence. "I had a whim. . . . Rather wanted to wish Isabel a Merry Christmas."

"She'll be asleep when we get there, anyway," Cecil said, and loathed the harsh sound of her own voice.

Du Maurier leaned back and idly counted the street lamps as they fled past.

"I didn't know you knew C. H.," Cecil remarked at last, curiosity conquering her taciturn mood. "I once asked him about you—he'd never even heard the name."

"H hadn't he?" said Du Maurier non-committally.

Something in Cecil snapped. "Damn you, Du Maurier!" she cried. "You have some secret. You're sailing under false colors and I mean to find out why!"

Du Maurier stretched out his legs, and regarded two delicate reflections on the tips of his patent leather boots.

"Solving riddles is a splendid mind

trainer," he finally observed. "By all means apply yourself to this one. It will give you a much needed purpose in life."

Cecil was too angry to reply.



Chapter Sixteen

IT WAS at approximately this time that Isabel, facing about, saw the studio door swing open.

Outlined against the golden light of the outer hall she perceived the figure of Stockbridge Potter, pale, disheveled, and with difficulty supported by a strange young man in a purple necktie.

Isabel moved rapidly to the table; switched on the lamp.

"Say, does this guy live here?" enquired the strange young man, blinking. Just then Potter's knees gave way entirely and he sagged to the floor. Isabel took his feet, the strange young man grasped him firmly beneath the armpits, and between them they managed to carry him to the divan.

Only then did Isabel raise frightened inquiring eyes to the stranger, and stammer: "What happened . . . is . . . was there an accident?"

"Keep your shirt on," he advised with an engaging smile, "S'not wood alcohol, or anything like that your brother's got. Just a hard-boiled bun."

Isabel recoiled sharply. "He isn't my brother."

She thought a shade of dismay passed over the stranger's visage. "Your husband, Madam?" he inquired.

Isabel colored. "N-no," and then, catching sight of the stranger's expression, she added with hasty severity, "And, since you took the trouble to ask, he does not live here. Not at all."

To her amazement the young man in the purple necktie flushed deeply crimson. She noted he was a pleasant looking boy, with clear olive skin framing grey eyes as deep and pensive and heavy lashed as those of a young girl. His hair, exhibited now as he removed

his crush hat in a sweepingly apologetic gesture, was parted in the middle; starting in a smooth expanse it was clipped short above close-set and pointed ears.

"I beg your pardon," he stammered finally. "If you'll let me get over, I'll do my bit toward throwing him out. He told me this was his address, the son o—excuse me—the liar."

Further description was needless, since a voice from the divan was heard to murmur somnolent greetings; and turning, the two saw Potter languidly open first one eye and then the other, while a torrent of conversation poured from his lips. "Greetings, frens. Holilay greetings. Have one on me. Accustomed as I am to pullic speaking. For Gossake, Isabel, how'd you get here? And whosis youth?"

Isabel shook with mirth. Wiping tears of sheer amusement from her eyes, she explained that the youth had brought him to the studio. "He said you told him you lived here."

"So I did. Remember now." Potter yawned, stretched himself. "Remarkable gelius on my part." The wax had come off on one side of his moustache, and it drooped. Potter turned it up solemnly. "Kicked out of boarding house. Couldn't pay rent. Thought this place brilliantly convelient. Step right out Washenon Square for night."

"He's getting sleepy," the young man whispered in an aside to Isabel.

"Many thanks," Potter continued, curling his head into a cushion, "to strange young man. Sessively grateful. No idea where I picked him up, might have been aquarium, might have been zoo, pro'ly zoo. He looks like a poly. File out his name. Wanna . . . wanna . . . thank . . . him. . . ."

The last words were interspersed with prodigious yawns, which unexpectedly merged into snores. The strange young man, who, during the latter part of the oration, had been fumbling, in his pocket, remarked cheerfully: "Well, he's out," and producing an immaculate card, upon which the name of Wadsworth Silverstein,

and the address of Silverstein's Superior Suits Co., were neatly printed, he proffered it to Isabel in his courtliest manner.

"My name is Rayburn, Isabel Rayburn," she responded, holding out her hand. The young man shook it so violently that the fingers stuck together. She glanced down at them, and observed, "The gentleman on the divan, who is so vastly indebted to you, is Mr. Stockbridge Potter, lately of the American Consulate in Cairo. Perhaps you will be good enough to tell me where you met—or shall I say found—him."

"You shall say found," agreed the obliging Mr. Silverstein. "And I'd be tickled to death to tell you anything." Thereupon he removed his overcoat, hung it over the back of the most uncomfortable chair, and sat down. "I discovered him sitting on the curbstone in front of Jimmie Cassidy's old saloon up at Forty-eighth Street. He was bawling to beat the dutch and saying over and over, 'Ain't this here prohibition hell, the way it's put up the rents?' And I took him by the arm and said, 'Look here, young fellah, prohibition may be something awful for you, but at the present moment you're so wet that a fish would take you for the Atlantic Ocean and jump down your throat. Come in, before you catch the pneumonia. Where do you live?' And then he gave me this address, you see. As for being indebted. . . ." Mr. Silverstein shrugged magnanimously. "Seeing that it's helped me meet you," he said, "I'll say it was a pleasure, and we'll call it square."

"Thank you," answered Isabel, but so coldly and stiffly that she might better have voiced a reproof. Isabel was more of a snob than she cared to admit.

"Now, see here, Miss Rayburn, I don't want you to get me wrong. I'm not trying to be fresh, only—" his long, grey eyes sought hers wistfully, but found no help. "I know you're A-1 in the social register and all that. I'm not such a dumbbell that I can't see the difference between us in that way.

And—" still no encouragement. But he continued doggedly: "All my life I've wanted to push ahead. I've watched the fellow above, you understand, and imitated him, and tried to improve on his methods. But I've never had a chance to meet a girl like you. And now that I have—well, I'd like to go on knowing you. D'you see?"

Isabel did not know what to say; therefore she said nothing. She sensed a flame in Silverstein's voice which was not explained in his somewhat clumsy speech.

"You don't see," Mr. Silverstein remarked presently, and quite correct he was. "You think this is some kind of a new line I'm pulling." He broke off. When he spoke again, a fine edge of sarcasm cut his words. "What shall we do," he asked, "with your good friend, Mr. Potter, lately of the American Consulate in Cairo?"

"I should let him sleep."

The words, spoken in Cecil's voice, brought Isabel and her companion sharply about. Cecil, her evening, wrap thrown back from gleaming shoulders, stood smiling in amused self-possession. Beside her was Richard Du Maurier.

"Merry Christmas," he said, and bowed to Isabel. He seemed to add, "Couldn't you do better than this, poor girl?"

Isabel was too utterly astounded to guard herself. "Why—Dick—" she took a step forward, her hands outstretched. "Why, Dick . . . whatever brought you? . . ."

"A taxi-cab, my dear. An orange and black one. I came," Du Maurier added, "in the hope of surprising you, but it seems you have turned the tables on me."

Isabel explained. "Mr. Silverstein was good enough to come to Stock's rescue," she said, smiling for the first time upon the stranger. "I want you to know him. My sister, Cecil. Mr. Silverstein. And Mr. Du Maurier."

Mr. Silverstein shook hands all the way round. Mr. Du Maurier disengaged his fingers, and looked at them

as though they were valuable antiques. "Really," said Isabel, "what are we going to do?"

Cecil took command of the situation.

"It's Christmas Day," she cried. "Let's each have a drink and some scrambled eggs."



Chapter Seventeen

TOWARD three o'clock Potter awoke with a headache, to find a group of solemn youngsters discussing matters supposed to be discussed by sociologists.

Silverstein said: "I don't suppose I'll ever be able to dope a social system worked out on the basis of the age of families. Take this fellow Potter. Now, Miss Rayburn's been telling me his family were among the first settlers of Maryland, and had all sorts of grants from the King and so on. Well—look at him!"

Four faces turned in Potter's direction.

Potter made a ceremonious bow, and echoed: "Sure, look at me."

"No offense intended," Silverstein put in hastily.

"Go on, don't mind Potter," advised Du Maurier. "He knows his limitations."

"Yes," said Potter, "let's play truth."

Everybody applauded that idea.

"Well, then," Silverstein hesitated but a second before throwing himself into the breach. "he's a drunken bum that's never done a day's work in his life. He's the tail end of a great family. Why—" Silverstein held out his arm, flexing the muscles. "He's bigger than I am. But I could lick him with one arm tied behind me, and my feet in a bag."

"We'll take your word for it," observed Potter, who fortunately could not be insulted. "You're perfectly right. Here am I, a son of the Revolution, chip off the Plymouth Rock, petted infant of a mother with a family tree that was old when the tree

of knowledge was planted, and a father who never soiled his hands with honest toil. As you say, I am a drunken bum. Incidentally," he went on, "I should have starved long ago if I hadn't had friends to care for me. Now you—" he wagged his head gently toward Silverstein. "You've gallons of money. And yet you couldn't pass the front door of clubs where I—the drunken bum—would be accepted without a murmur. Why, I bet your father came over from Russia in the steerage, and peddled shoestrings for a living."

Silverstein was more sensitive than Potter. The blood rushed to his forehead: he started from his chair. Du Maurier begged him not to take offense.

"Potter didn't mean to imply that it was a disgrace. Something to be rather proud of, you know—being a self-made man. And, truthfully, didn't your father peddle something?"

Du Maurier's hint of flattery turned the trick. Although his eyes retained the look of an injured puppy, Silverstein relaxed. "Sure he did. Peddled second-hand clothes down on the Bowery. Then he worked in a sweatshop. Then he got a shop of his own, and other fellows worked for him. Now—" the note of belligerence, of challenge, roughened his smooth voice. "he has four cars, two of 'em foreign ones, and he could buy all four of you four times over, see?"

No one cared to take up the challenge.

"Surely I see," replied Potter, faintly animated by signs of returning life. "He could buy me four thousand times over if he wanted to. And if he waits long enough he'll buy himself into the place he wants to reach."

"I wonder. . . ." Silverstein's eyes seemed to fasten wistfully upon some far off and beautiful dream. But after a time their expression changed. He pounded the table with his fist. "What gets my goat," he brought out, "is that this good-for-nothing feels superior to me. Superior! And what's he got to feel superior about except a lot of

dirty ancestors that are dead and buried now? Grants from the King . . . hell. . . ." He stopped—rushed on. "I went to school. Just because I've picked up a lot of slang since I been working you needn't think I'm ignorant. I got a scholarship for college and the highest honors that was—were—given. I'd have gone to college, too, only my old man busted down and I had to step into his shoes. I did it, too. In six months I knew that business from A to Z. And I've been operating it for four years now. How many fellows of twenty have done as much, do you think, how many?"

"None probably," Potter cut in, in his placidly condescending manner, "certainly none of the ones I know."

"And then," Silverstein went on, "Miss Rayburn freezes up because I'm impertinent enough actually to say I'm glad I met her. She doesn't care if Potter . . . late of the Consulate in Cairo . . . passes out on her sofa. Oh, no. His family were among the first settlers of Maryland. But that I should pay her a personal compliment . . . I . . . a damned little Jew. . . ."

"Have another drink," said Du Maurier. "This is growing interesting. I can't imagine Isabel objecting to a compliment from . . . anybody."

Silverstein clenched his hands again. "It's because I'm a Jew," he reiterated. "That's what!"

"No, it isn't!" For the first time in hours Isabel broke into speech. "It's because—" Isabel stopped before following the precedent of brutal frankness. "Because you're a second-rate sort of Jew that has lots of money and little of anything else. You think you're educated because you went to school. You think you're well bred because you do not eat with a knife—in public—or say ain't. You pretend you are proud because you come from a race that was old before Christ was born. But you are not proud. Your pride has been beaten and kicked out of you by centuries of servility in Russia, where Jews are a little less than dogs and a little more than rats. Some day you'll

learn that what you are up against is not Christianity, but the Jews that came here a hundred years before you did. Why, I know Jews," she cried, "that wouldn't have you in their houses; that would cut me off their calling lists if they could see me now . . ." she stopped, suddenly appalled by the look in Silverstein's eyes, and: "I'm sorry. . . ." she murmured, bitterly ashamed of her outburst, "really . . . I'm sorry!"

"You needn't be . . . sorry," Silverstein flamed, outraged by her sympathy. "We don't need your pity. Because we have the cash and cash is what counts today. You can talk . . . and talk . . . and talk, and while you're talking we'll be buying railroads and electric companies and banks; as Shakespeare says: The power will be ours. . . ."

Isabel thought of Susie. Then she smiled calmly. "Not yet," said Isabel. "Oh no, not yet."

He answered: "Anything can be bought." And swung suddenly upon Potter. "How broke are you?" he asked.

By way of answer Potter turned his pockets inside out.

"But don't try to lend me money," he said ungraciously. "Because you won't get it back, and I don't know you well enough to rob you."

Silverstein positively snorted. "Lend you money! Hell, no." He removed from his pocket the gold knife which weighted one end of his watch-chain, swung it in a glittering circle. "I'm not sinking gold in a bottomless well," he assured them. "No, sir. I'm offering you a job. A job with Silverstein's Superior Suits Company. Take it or leave it."

No one interrupted him.

"Come home and sleep at my pa's house tonight. Go to work tomorrow, if you feel good, next day if you don't. But show these folks that you got some backbone, some guts, something beside a family tree."

Potter grinned. "I haven't. But like old Jurgen I'll taste any drink

once. Even work." He arose, stood swaying uncertainly, while Silverstein, son of a Russian immigrant peddler, awaited the apology he thought due to the hostess. It was not forthcoming.

"For myself," said Silverstein in farewell, having accepted the burden of the excuses, "I can't say I'm sorry this happened." He turned directly to Isabel. "I want to see you again. Will you have lunch with me on Saturday and go to a show afterward?"

Isabel stepped back. "I can't," she said frigidly. "I am engaged for Saturday. Some other time, perhaps."

Silverstein lowered his long lashes, bowed ironically, and went out.

"You've made a conquest, my dear," said Richard Du Maurier, folding a white silk muffler over his chest and sliding into his fur-lined greatcoat. "You ought to cultivate the young man. I'm sure—" he paused, glanced carelessly about the room, and then let his eyes dwell upon Isabel's arms. "I'm sure," said Richard Du Maurier. "that he could give you lots of — rubies."



Chapter Eighteen

THE FRENZIED week between Christmas and New Year passed quickly. Its only significance for Isabel lay in the fact of a renewed contact with Du Maurier—a casual contact which failed to simplify a situation which Isabel found increasingly painful. She tried to occupy her mind with her work. She sent the Sappho to be cased, and began to search for a new subject. A girl called asking for work as a model. She was a brown Italian peasant with flat thighs, a firm ample bosom, and a tragic history. Isabel, delighted with her beautiful form, her flashing teeth, and her melancholy brown eyes, spent a week doing rapid sketches in pencil and water color. One January morning she realized that it was time to pick a subject and start modeling.

Napolita, resting on the divan, was

looking down at a cushion she held in her arms. Her eyes were wet.

"It maka me theenk of the baby that die," she explained, flushing, to Isabel. Napolita had been a mother first and a wife afterward. "It ees so warm . . . here . . . againsta the heart. You no laugh, yes?"

Isabel was far from laughter. But she flung up triumphant arms.

"Oh, Napolita," she cried, "I am going to model you just that way. . . . See, you have the rarest of figures, the soft contours of a mother combined with a rare slenderness. Most women who have had babies are heavy looking."

"It is because I have leetle to eat," remarked Napolita cheerfully. "Many time I cannot getta da work."

"You'll have a steady job now," Isabel promised. "I'm going to model you . . . model you with a baby in your arms, Napolita, and I shall call it. . . . I shall call it the Madonna of the Streets."

Napolita, who understood nothing except that she would have work, and therefore food, sat smiling her white smile, while the tears rolled down her face. . . .

Isabel was still poring over sketches when Du Maurier dropped in. He found the study interesting. "What will you call it?" he asked. "It lends itself astonishingly to imaginative titling."

"I thought at first I should call it 'Madonna of the Streets' after the model, who was just that," Isabel explained. "Later I decided to name it 'Eternal Woman.'"

"'Eternal Huntress' would be better."

"Why? Why 'Eternal Huntress'?"

Du Maurier shrugged his shoulders and glanced downward at the dark red carnation in his buttonhole.

"Eternal woman, or eternal huntress," he said at last. "It is one and the same thing. For each woman is relentless in her search for the father of those children which will be her single great gift to posterity."

Isabel turned quite pink.

"To bad you aren't an author," she snapped. "No doubt the world would worship at the shrine of your eloquence. As for me, I recognize the paraphrase. It's from one of last year's novels."

"Speaking of worship," murmured Du Maurier. "Have you seen our friend Silverstein?"

Isabel had not. In fact, had it not been for Du Maurier's satirical references, plus an occasional acid bit of character sketching by Stockbridge Potter, Isabel certainly would have forgotten Silverstein entirely. But Potter remained a link between an embarrassing past and an undiscernible future.

Potter was gradually becoming embittered by a struggle against the harsh cold world. Having accepted Silverstein's offer of a position, because his friends refused to support him any longer, he had worked regularly for the first two weeks. Then he skipped a day, and presently, less cautious, skipped three. It was after his second absence without leave that Potter vituperatively referred to Silverstein as an enterprising upstart, and expressed an earnest wish that Silverstein would stop talking about "guts."

Cecil prophesied that Potter's working days were drawing to a close. "He'll last about one more week," she observed. "After that Silverstein's Superior Suits Company will give Stock the sack and he will slide sumptuously back into his seductive practice of sponging upon suckers. Pretty good that, eh?"

The brilliant sally was lost upon Isabel, who replied indifferently, "You might repeat it to him. He's coming around later to join the rest of the elite."

IT WAS a cold and gleaming Sunday. Great bolts of sunshine fell upon patches of frozen snow upon the window-sills, crossed them, and lay like lazy tigers on the floor.

Cecil and Isabel, having loaded the table with sandwiches, teacups, bottles and glasses, were prepared to welcome

any number of people; which was fortunate, for presently there was a violent knocking and banging, followed by a human avalanche which laughed, joked and chattered, as it descended upon the studio.

Du Maurier and Susie came in with the crowd. The men were attentive to Susie. The women snubbed her. It was a mixed gathering, but a gathering that mixed pleasantly like the colors of oil on water. Only the red-haired girl stood alone, a conspicuous, a splash of carmine on a finished canvas.

Isabel took stock of the company, greeting alike those she had known before and those she had not. There was Colin Vincennes, the Junior Partner of Harcourt, Hutchinson and Vincennes, a blonde man with wicked black eyes, son of a French Vicomte and an English comedienne. He had just returned from California, where his wife, Andrea Dartie, the composer, had been recovering from the mild nervous shock of her first husband's suicide.

Then there was Marge Livingstone, fluffy haired debutante, with a boy from Princeton, and Larry Sanville, prepared, as usual, to propose to Isabel if the opportunity presented itself. There was Ruthie Vane, seductive as a Kirschner drawing, whom every man loved and every woman hated, with her latest acquisition, a young Cuban of an old family—Ramon Rafaelo de Madrid, who wore blue shirts and white spats. There was Rodney Cheever, who had once had an alarming affair with the naughty French opera singer Nicolette Bertaux. Rodney had recovered sufficiently to marry his brother's sister-in-law. Consuela Converse, a blonde and slim young woman with a tremendous income and a mouth like a rosebud.

There were others whom Isabel knew—Elwin Dare, the dramatic critic; H. Barclay Benson, anonymous author of that socialistic volume entitled "Them as Has Gets"; Jimmie Peck, who had taken a degree at a British University and was known everywhere as the man who put the Ford in Ox-

ford; Jimmie's precise and meticulous wife whom everybody called Mrs. J-for-justice O-for-onion Peck, because of her telegraphic manner of speech. There were a few artists who were neighbors. In fact, there was a mob.

Frantic throwing off of coats and mufflers was interspersed with shouts of "Look here, Ruthie, where were you on Wednesday?—I thought we had a tea date." and "Rod, for cat's sake, don't sit on my new hat." Then Larry Sanville asked where Potter was.

"I want to offer him my condolences. . . ."

"Yes," Rodney Cheever chimed in, "I hear they're sending him up to Mat-teawan next week."

A comprehensive search under tables, chairs, and the piano revealed the fact that Potter was not there. "He's probably home recuperatin' from the strain," Larry Sanville suggested, and turned to Cecil. "Is it true that he has a job?"

Cecil said that it was. "At least he had one when last seen."

"What does he do? Sell bonds?" asked Larry, who sold one bond a year—to his mother.

"Ahoy! Isabel," hailed Colin Vincennes, from his usual vantage-point—alongside the drinks. "I don't think you've met my latest wife." He waved his glass cheerfully. "Wonderful woman. Very famous and beautiful."

Isabel went over to be presented to Andrea Dartie, the composer. She was rather taken aback when she learned that this pale-skinned, auburn-haired girl was a cousin of Du Maurier. She had never fancied that Du Maurier, man of mystery, would have a cousin who was well known, who, moreover, lived within a block of Isabel. Du Maurier had not considered this contingency himself. Knowing Andrea, he was glad that she liked him. She was one of the few who knew his secret.

Du Maurier frankly classified his cousin as the most ruthlessly selfish woman he had ever met. She had been spoiled and petted, brilliantly but eccen-

trically educated, eternally acceded to. She suffered; others suffered at her hands. But all the turbulent inner emotion which her scarlet mouth bespoke was protected by a wall as smooth as glass and as hard as a diamond. From behind the wall Andrea reached out, like Scylla, and took what she wanted. Only in music did she give. But for her husband she had a violent physical attachment, jealous and passionate; she guarded him as a tigress her cubs, with a cold and dangerous ferocity. She kept what she took.

Du Maurier, looking from her to Isabel, thought they were as different as two women could be. He looked at Andrea's pale skin and even features, features so nicely chiselled, that she seemed more like a woman of ivory than a woman of flesh and blood. Only her scarlet mouth was mobile and sensuous. Her eyes, a well-known artist had said, were as wise as the eyes of the Mona Lisa, as cold as the eyes of a snake. "She will know great passion, that woman," Du Maurier thought, "but never great love." Then he looked once again from Andrea to Isabel. "The two Marys," he said to Colin, "Mary of Nazareth and Mary Magdalene." He added to himself, "Mother and prostitute."

Isabel had spread out some of her colored sketches of Napolita. Andrea said:

"What a magnificent animal! How silly to paint her as a madonna . . . with a baby in her arms. She's far too handsome to have babies." And Andrea glanced almost apprehensively at her own slender body.

"As a matter of fact," Isabel pointed out, leaping to the defense of her concept, "she's had a baby. It's dead."

The human element did not appear to interest Andrea Dartie. "She's kept her figure remarkably. Most women—ugh—" Andrea shuddered. "Hopeless ruins! And all for the sake of some crawling rascals who will grow up and curse the day when they were conceived."

"Don't you want to have children?"



"He is certainly doomed to be the father of your children"

Isabel asked. She had met women who did not like children; even women who loathed them. But all these were cold, sexless, self-absorbed, or perverse. That anyone as obviously enamored as Andrea Dartie should revolt from child-bearing was incomprehensible. To Isabel it meant a revolt from the perpetuation of love.

"No. I don't want children," Andrea's single concern with love was the pleasure of experiencing it. "It's unlucky in my family. My mother died

of it. So did my grandmother. I am quite satisfied with living. I will leave the giving of life to God and the lower classes."

Isabel's upper lip curled under. "You are afraid," she said.

Andrea nodded cheerfully. "My one form of cowardice. Besides," and she parted her smooth red lips, "I wasted all my maternal instincts on my first husband, who was both more charming and more helpless than most babies. There are dozens of reasons."

"I should think that—love for your husband—would render them invalid."

"*Pas du tout*. It's a contributing cause. I should be atrociously jealous of my children and in terror lest Colin should prefer them to me." Andrea moved so that the reflection of light upon her satin blouse emphasized the roundness of her breasts. "I have my work," said the woman whose eyes were as wise as the eyes of the Mona Lisa. "I must think about that. One cannot have a career and take nine months a year off to have babies."

"Then one should stay single." Hotly Isabel swept the sketches into an open portfolio. "What is there in a marriage which is barren of children?"

Andrea watched her — indulgently. Then, "The love of a husband," she replied. "Which is frequently lacking when the children have come and the figure has gone."

The composer leaned forward and took Isabel's hands. "What a woman you are, my dear," she whispered. "What a one hundred percent woman." Laughter rippled up from her throat like so much rippling water. "And what a fool is Dick, to think that he can escape this inexorable devotion. He is certainly doomed to be the father of your children. . . ."

Across the room shrill voices struggled for supremacy. Glasses clinked. Someone tortured frantic syncopations out of the piano, which wailed as if it were an unbearable outrage to be thus torn from Chopin and delivered into the hands of Irving Berlin.

Isabel felt that she was being hemmed in, surrounded and made prisoner, by these people who believed that a woman in love was like a leopard stalking its prey. She began to doubt their wrongness. She began to wonder whether this were not the truth, which lay alone in the depths of her mind, and at which she never would look.

The piano crashed on like an invading army. Larry Sanville continued shouting for Potter, who had not ap-

peared. Time slipped past and bottles began to look empty.

Isabel shut her mind like a box and decided to have a good time.



Chapter Nineteen

"**B**UT it's Sunday night, Larry," Isabel protested.

It was nine o'clock and the party had dwindled to about half a dozen couples and a few "stags."

"What matter?" Larry grinned fatuously, and tipped back upon his heels. "We're not going to any uptown robbers' den; it's the slums for us. Too bad Stock didn't turn up. He knows some rare dumps. Who cares if it's Sunday night?"

Who cared indeed?

New York, of late often denounced as a modern Babylon, takes no rest upon the seventh, or any other day. They are tireless, the Babylonians. You meet them everywhere, at all times, in all guises. You meet them at fashionable clubs, at sedately magnificent hotels. You see them furiously dancing with the ancient denizens on the dance floors of Broadway. You see them flocking, diamond bracelets, opera hats, monocles, et al., to some obscure rat-hole in the Bowery. By their will they make and break a hundred smart cafés, a thousand sordid joints, and then pass on, these Babylonians, these petted children with restaurants for toys.

Thus for a time they made Victor Maclaughlin's Alhambra, in that part of the sleepless city where streets with numbers give way to streets with names. They made the Alhambra, and flocked there until the police took exception to the management's flair for passing cocaine in its dirty nickel salt cellars. But that was not until later. It was in its heyday when Isabel and her party drew in before a line of cars like the Monday night line at the Metropolitan Opera House.

A blue light was shining in a dingy

hallway. Sinister, Isabel thought it, as she followed Du Maurier and Susie down the staircase which gave upon a white-washed hall.

Smoke hung like a pall upon the scene before them although not half of the glistening marble topped tables ranged along the wall were filled. Isabel's first impression was of dirt, not ordinary dust and grime, but a peculiar, permeating kind of filth. The place reeked of warm bodies and strong perfumes and cigars. Multicolored flashes sped from the arms of women who wore glittering bracelets. The unpromising black and white of a dinner jacket cut in, here and there, upon the informal aspect of the place. Heat—an atmosphere oppressive, exciting, stimulating to the morbid imagination.

"Dick. . . ." Isabel felt her hand plucking at Du Maurier's sleeve. She could not control it. "I don't like this place. Let's go."

Susie's face, immaculately red and white beneath the round brown eyes, poked itself through a gathering haze. "Don't be a killjoy, Isabel. Come on. Larry has a table."

"I feel . . . so dizzy."

"Be a sport!"

"I'll try."

Slowly the room began to take shape before her eyes, the figures about her to assume definite forms, to attain volume.

"Are you better now?" Du Maurier asked.

"Yes . . . only. . . . It's hot in here." She looked about her, from table to table, noting the groups as though each one were especially relevant to her. "Interesting people. . . ." she murmured.

A college youth with oiled hair parted in the middle ogling a woman whose painted tell-tale eyes, all humid beneath a bizarre Egyptian headdress, suggested that she had long since discovered virginity to be a fruitless flower.

Passion.

A tall, sinuous girl, gilt-haired, who looked as though she ought to own a

greyhound with a turquoise collar and a motor built to imitate a boat—holding the hand of a sturdy black-haired woman in a tweed suit and crush hat.

Degeneration. Infinite refinements upon the art of love, stifling the race.

"That type is indigenous to the place," Du Maurier said, interpreting Isabel's thought. "Those two are eternally here. The blonde is a poetess," and he mentioned a name internationally famous. "One of the makers of great art. And there—" he pointed to the girl who played the piano, "is the character who made the Alhambra famous."

Isabel saw that she was a rosy-faced girl, a miraculously small, elfin creature. "She looks like an angel from an old Italian canvas."

"A drug addict," Du Maurier said. "She tells the most ribald jokes in the world while she looks as though the harps of Heaven were in her hands."

Isabel pointed out still another group. A tableful of dirty, intelligent-looking men, who drank sour red wine, talked noisily, and scribbled upon sheets of paper with extraordinary long red pencils. They might have been sculptors, musicians, or ambitious plumbers.

"Members of a world-famous organization which deals with the occult," Du Maurier elucidated. "They are said to have peculiar and rather revolting rites. But no one has ever been able to prove anything. Rousillon scares them off."

"Rousillon?"

"Yes. Probably the greatest magician in the world. He's called 'The Prophet.' That man at the head of the table with the tangled reddish beard. A most uncanny fellow, really."

Isabel twisted her fingers together.

"Are there any normal people here?" she asked.

"Not yet," said Du Maurier. "That is, unless you count ourselves."

Colin Vincennes leaned forward: "They come down from Park Avenue later . . . to give the freaks the once over."

"And by that time," Larry Sanville

explained, "the freaks have gone home to indulge their freakishness. You see, they reverse order on the usual régime, which is uptowners early and regulars late."

"Everything seems reverse order here," Isabel said with a shudder. "Really, Larry, I can't see why you brought us to such a place. Let's clear out—I have a feeling something horrid will happen if we don't."

Susie headed the storm of objection which greeted this remark.

"You old scare-cat," she accused, in a voice of indulgent contempt. She turned to Du Maurier, who was looking more than usually bored, and added: "I'd simply adore having my fortune told. Is he expensive?"

"Expensive?" Du Maurier stared. Then he burst out laughing. "My dear child, you don't mean Rousillon? But he isn't that kind of a fortune teller. He never takes money, or does it professionally."

Susie lowered her eyes shrewdly. "Everyone has his price."

"Oh, you little fool," Cecil whispered sibilantly. "He's watching you. He's heard every word you said."

Isabel gasped: "Let's go. Oh. . . I know something is going to happen."

"Mademoiselle has reason."

It was the man with the reddish beard who spoke. The room fell silent at once. The girl at the piano lifted her hands from the keys and lowered stupefied eye-lids. Rousillon, the soothsayer, fixed black, beady eyes upon Susie, who squirmed.

"You will see, redhead," he spat out. "The evening will bring what you expect not."

Susie twitched, half rose, and then dropped into place with an insolent laugh. "You can't scare me, old nut," she said, "whoever you are. What do you want?"

"Of you, redhead, nothing." He waited, waited until the smoky atmosphere had absorbed the last echo of his words. Then: "Mademoiselle," he said to Isabel. "I would speak with you—alone."

Du Maurier whispered: "Sit still!" And his hand fell heavily upon Isabel's arm.

"It is of no avail, Monsieur." Rousillon's beady eyes never left Isabel's. "You see . . . she comes."

With locked eyes, they moved across the room, Rousillon toward a curtained doorway. Isabel toward Rousillon.

"One moment." Du Maurier barred the Frenchman's way. "You must not leave this room. You understand. *Ne quittez pas cette chambre.*"

There was a pause. A pause, while Isabel stood dazed; while Du Maurier and Rousillon regarded each other like two dogs across a bone. Then: "Monsieur need have no fear," quoth Rousillon the soothsayer, and drew back the curtain on its brass rings. "He may stand outside, if he will. I will not harm Mademoiselle." And taking her by the hand Rousillon led Isabel to a table beneath a high window, and drawing the curtain, sat down. Outside, Du Maurier stood like one spellbound, glued to the spot.

"WHAT do you want?" Isabel looked about the small room, dark but for a light outside the high narrow window which threw a green reflection on the ceiling. "What did you wish to say?"

The great Rousillon shrugged. "A word of encouragement, only a word, to you, Mademoiselle, who have been struggling through the dark. I wish only that you believe what I say. Therefore I ask that you give me a test."

"My name." Isabel leaned tensely forward, gripping the cold marble edge of the table. "What is my name?"

"Rayburn, Mademoiselle. Daughter of that Rayburn who has done brave deeds, but will die like his woman, in the bed. And—after a fashion—by cause of you, Mademoiselle."

Isabel had shrunk back, her fingertips, pressed against her throat. "It cannot be true," she muttered. "Someone told you . . . my name. And the

rest you made up. I will not believe that it is true."

She could feel that Rousillon moved nearer to her. "I will swear it, then," said Rousillon softly. "In the name of the white leopard. Is that enough?"

There was no sound save the sound made by Isabel's deep breathing.

"Is it enough?" asked Rousillon.

"It is enough."

"Then be brave, Mademoiselle. Heed not the trial which awaits you tonight, nor other trials. They will but make you strong. Let that thought which has been beating its dark wings in the depths of your mind be set free; it will lead to Victory."

"Monsieur, I do not understand."

"Ask then."

"I do not understand . . . about this thought. The thought which will lead to Victory. Can you tell me what it is?"

A long pause.

"Are you brave, Mademoiselle?"

"I . . . am not afraid."

"Then you shall see." Rousillon leaned forward in the half-light, and she heard a sound, as of sand poured onto the table. "Look down, Mademoiselle, and do not move your eyes."

The sound of a scraping match. A thin flame which ran toward Isabel, along the table, following an unseen substance and igniting as it moved. A sheet of paper, quite white, and a long red pencil.

"Do not move your eyes, Mademoiselle."

The pencil marked upon the white paper. Strange unfamiliar figures. Figures enclosed by a circle, figures separated into four parts by the four segments of a cross.

The thin blue flames ran round about the paper, paling as they ran. A faint sweet odor hung upon the air. The flames paled . . . paled . . . and were gone. A scented quiet was everywhere.

"Are you at peace?" whispered Rousillon.

"I am at peace," she said, mechanically.

"Then you may move your eyes."

She lifted them, with difficulty, and looked about. In the darkness she could perceive no sign of Rousillon.

"Monsieur," she whispered once.

There was no answer.

Now she saw that the green reflection had gone from the ceiling, and there was nothing left in the room but a dim opalescent glow, which changed distances oddly, in that now the room seemed larger and now smaller, than before. A vague sleepiness, as of some potent and not unpleasant drug, came over Isabel, who looked out upon the interchanging gloom and shimmer accustomed her eyes to it. And as Isabel watched, a figure seemed to take form, and the figure was all white, surrounded by a sort of incandescence, and it moved toward Isabel without seeming to walk, as the figures in dreams sometimes move. Anon it stood directly before her; yet she could not distinguish the body, which seemed to be part of the surrounding atmosphere, but only a beautiful and somehow familiar face. The eyes were deep, like the eyes of Du Maurier, and the curve of the lips resembled her own. And suddenly Isabel's heart filled with a torment of yearning, as though this white and silent form was something close and dear to her, and though she knew it was not flesh and blood, it seemed as though her touch might make it so.

But as she put out her hand to touch the figure it receded, beckoned.

Wherefore Isabel, still in the manner of a dream, which gives often a double personality, began to follow the figure, although she did not move from her place. And she followed it for a long way, seeing it always ahead of her like a spot of moonlight, and farther and farther she followed it, without coming to the walls of the room.

Then fell upon her ears a sound as of running water; dampness was all about her, and a thick winding darkness, and the white figure paused for a moment before, with a lingering slowness, it vanished into the earth.



When Isabel came to the place where the white form had vanished the darkness lifted a little, and she was able to see upon what manner of spot she had stumbled. She looked down at the place where the figure had vanished and saw that it was a deep excavation, with its rim all matted in green foliage,

which appeared to be wet and glistening. Isabel looked down and saw, very far away, clear shining water. But of the white figure there was no sign.

Now the darkness had lifted still more, and Isabel saw that she was at the foot of a curious steep hill, with sides all covered by tangled greenery



"I would speak with Mademoiselle—alone"

and a dome of polished granite at its top. And it was a place she did not remember, for she had never been there before.

So Isabel sighed, filled with deep melancholy, for having so strangely lost the figure she had followed. Yet all the while it seemed to her that she had not entirely lost it; that in the water at the bottom of the well the figure might be found again, and also that—she knew not what—toward which the figure had been leading her.

Then it seemed that a small voice, and where it came from Isabel could not guess, directed her to the hill. And the voice said that at the very top of the hill there was a passage which, by

many steps, led down into the water of the well. . . .

SO ISABEL set off around the base of the hill, hunting for a way that would be safe. For the hill was steep and—and the darkness having lifted yet again—she could see that the path was strewn all over with blanched ancient bones, and the hill threw a black shadow about Isabel, and she was cold and afraid, for about all the base of the mountain there was but one safe place, and this was barred by a high gate, which must have been closed for ever, since it was all overgrown with thick black vines, through which she could not see. Once again she went about the foot of the mountain, but

found no other place, and so came again to the well. And as she looked into the water a ray of moonlight pierced the branches overhead and made a white movement in the depths. And Isabel looked up and saw that the moon must have risen, for its gleam fell full upon the round granite top of the hill.

Then, shivering, Isabel made her way back to the gate, stumbling as she went over bleached bones and decayed dank leaves. Now and again it was as though there were a ghostly movement in the path before her, but of this she could not be certain, for at the end of the path stood the high gate, and before the gate there was no movement of any kind, but rather a stillness like the stillness of death. And Isabel was frightened, as she had never been before, so that tiny drops of moisture appeared upon her forehead, and the flesh beneath her fingernails tingled. But the thought that through this gate lay that toward which the white form had been leading gave Isabel courage. Thus she put out her hand in the heavy stillness and touched the lock.

Now, as Isabel touched the lock, a strange thing came to pass. There was a tolling and chiming of many bells, such a tolling and tinkling and chiming as could scarce be made by all the temples and churches and mosques in all the four parts of the earth. And this ringing seemed to come from within, not from without, until Isabel was filled up with a magnitude of sound, so that her knees beneath her grew weak and it was as though she swooned. . . .

She awoke to see the curtain drawn back on its rings of brass and to hear her own voice saying, "I do not understand. I do not understand."

There was no sign of Rousillon, but Du Maurier was bending over her, and Susie Burnham was plucking at her arm while Susie's teeth chattered with fright.

"I'm quite all right," Isabel assured them.

"Then for God's sake come quickly,"

cried Susie. "My father just got here, and if he finds me he'll kill me. Thank Heaven, there's another door to this room!"

Before she had a chance to reply, Isabel found herself pushed into a passage and propelled up a flight of stairs.

On the sidewalk in front of Victor McLaughlin's Alhambra the little party gathered itself together for another spring into the city's Sunday night life. Of course, Isabel was assailed by a storm of questions, but she answered non-committally—she would not for the world have confessed that she understood nothing of what she had seen—and, as she showed no ill effect, all but Du Maurier put the matter out of their minds. Where to go next was a matter of greater, far greater, moment, and so, in the blue light which fell of the rickety steps of Victor MacLaughlin's Alhambra, they stood and argued.

"I know a nice little apartment up on Madison Avenue," suggested Larry Sanville, who had somehow got the idea that his first move was a tremendous success, "where we can have a quiet game of roulette. It's very unlike this. Mirrors and crystal chandeliers 'n everythin'."

"Private rooms?" enquired Susie sharply, with an apprehensive look behind her.

"Certainly. With all the commodities, includin' champagne."

"Let's go."

Thus, there was much piling into one side of taxicabs and falling out on the other, a trick fairly popular with the younger set until one of their number was killed in action—when it became an absolute rage. Finally the whole party was safely en route for Madison Avenue.

* * *

It was characteristic that in the general excitement not one of them noticed that a long, grey touring car detached itself from the line in front of Victor MacLaughlin's Alhambra, and followed, at a safe distance, the taxi containing Susie, Isabel, and Du Maurier.

Chapter Twenty

"THAT'S nothing," protested Susie, gathering in a pile of five-dollar chips; "just wait until I really get started."

The party had arrived without mishap at a well-known gambling-house on Madison Avenue. Larry Sanville had given the password; in practically no time they were installed in a sublime version of the *cabinet particulier*; the green cover was swept from a wheel and board; Susie, in the face of an admiring audience, starred number seventeen with a hundred dollars' worth of chips—and won.

"I'll risk my last hundred thousand," grinned Sanville. "You comin' in, blue-eyes?"

Isabel shook her head. The emotions of her experience with Rousillon had worn off, and—much in the manner of pain which dies down under judicious doses of morphine—had been succeeded by a spiritual serenity which Isabel herself could scarcely comprehend. The memory of her vision had faded out as very old memories do; it no longer aroused her fear, her curiosity. She was quite satisfied to stand back with half-closed eyes and absorb the atmosphere of this place.

Just as the Alhambra had made sin exciting, active, and malignant, so this place lulled the senses, made sin an exquisite indulgence for the sophisticated; gave, almost, a security in evil comparable to the security which stern ascetics find in a more popular but hardly more exacting religion. Great chandeliers of gilt bronze were festooned with prisms and globules of water-clear crystal. Against immaculate walls stood chairs as graceful as adolescent lads. Some roses, in a blue Ming jar, showered the air with a lovely and decadent fragrance. Isabel noticed that both doors, the one through which they had entered, and that other, through which Isabel was destined to pass, were fitted with heavy bolts. Bolts, they were of ornamental and highly polished brass, but

heavy and solid, immovable upon heavy and solid doors.

"I'm the girl who put the roulet in roulette." A glittering hand swept the chips from a low number. "I always win."

Susie again. And what she said was true. Her luck was phenomenal. Already she was half hidden by neat stacks of red and white and blue chips. She played, moreover, like one in whom the gaming spirit has been born and bred: with a patient and implacable certainty. It was as though all her timidity before the major chances, the chances of life, found its outlet in this reckless indifference to costs. Her face was emotionless as the face of a clock; only her eyes gleamed out across the table, shrewd, suspicious, alert. Her eyes smiled, and echoed the words of her mouth: "I always win."

"I always lose," said Isabel.

"Same here." And Larry Sanville stuck his hands into empty pockets. "Poor, poor mater. She'll have to buy another Liberty Bond. Never mind, blue eyes, perhaps we'll be lucky in love."

"Place your bets, ladies and gentlemen," said the man behind the wheel.

Rattle of chips. Isabel's eyes left the face of Du Maurier as she watched Susie starring eight; starring seventeen; covering the red.

"The game is closed, ladies and gentlemen. Nothing more goes."

The chatter ceased. There was a whirring sound. Then no sound at all, save the even click-click of the little white ball in the grooves.

"Back me, boys. I always win. You'll see."

The group behind Susie was augmenting.

"Two to one she's right," whispered Colin Vincennes to Sanville. And Colin's wife looked at him with anger in her cold green eyes.

Click-click. Click.

Enormous tension. And then, the voices.

At the first sound Isabel knew instinctively what had happened. Susie's father had come.

Click. Click-click.

In the silence every sound was deafening. One could hear the voices, rising louder, louder, like rising winds.

A polite menial with a placating tone. Soft wind. But Susie's father screamed like a cyclone; his voice came rasping through the thick walls, shaming, inescapable. . . . "Hand me over the keys, d'ye hear? I'm going through till I find what I'm after. Hand 'em over, I say, before I smash every door in this outfit. I'll call in the police. . . . I . . ."

Click-click. Click.

"Atta-boy. Now clear out. . . ."

For the first time that evening Susie raised her eyes from the table. The chips scattered and rolled everywhere, but Susie did not notice. Her eyes sought the face of Du Maurier, but it was shut against her. Then they turned to Isabel, and there they found pity.

"Isabel," she cried wildly. "I don't know what he'll do if he finds me. Help me, Isabel."

What was there for her to do?

"Go in and stop him! Talk to him for a moment. Tell him anything until he gets quieter. Oh, darling, I can't see him unless you do."

For one instant Cecil cut in on a scene that was by rights Susie's and Isabel's.

"I'll go if you want me to," Cecil said, and neither Susie nor Isabel had the least inkling of her motives. "There's no time to be lost."

But Isabel was already at the door, her hand on the bolt.

Click. Click . . . click. . . .

Something pulled the door from the other side.

ISABEL slipped quickly through and closed it behind her, hearing a voice call from the other side, "Number eight wins. . . . number eight."

"Who are you, heh?"

With a shock that snatched her back

to reality, Isabel saw a little black man with a nose and chin that almost met.

Susie's father, that was Susie's father.

The voice alone should have told her, she realized, what Isaac Burnham was. But it had not. Nothing had told her. And now, quite unexpectedly, she herself had come upon the truth. This was Susie's father! This little black man. This was the origin which had forever marked the boundaries of Susie's destiny. Cecil had been right.

"Who are you? What do you want?"

She wanted to say, "I came to learn the truth about my rival. I came to learn what Susie really is." But gratitude for the great revelation guided Isabel's tongue. "I am Susie's friend," she faltered, and managed to utter her name.

"Whaddo you want? Where's Suey? I want to take her out of this den."

"Susie was afraid. She asked me to come and talk to you first. It's really not as bad as it looks, you know. She's with nice people."

"Nice people, hell!" Isaac showed his teeth like a kicked mongrel. "Nice people don't bring good little girls to joints like this." His eyes met Isabel's, softened unwillingly. "You look like a decent sort of kid, and like you had a grain of sense in your bean, too. D'you think white paint can make this here dump clean? Waddo you let my baby come here for, if you're her friend? Wadda're you doing here yourself, heh? You got a papa?"

Isabel nodded.

"Waddo you think he'd say if he seen you here?"

Isabel visualized Adrian. "I—I don't think he'd mind," she said. "You see—he trusts me!"

"Well, I know women!" Isaac Burnham buried his hands in two deep pockets, and spread his legs apart. "I don't trust the best of 'em. And when it comes to my kid—" he interrupted himself swiftly with a gesture of pride. "Not that she ain't as good as gold, and

better—but she's hot-headed, and I ain't going to have her forming the kind of habits kids have today. I seen too much of what gambling does to folks. Worst of all, women."

"But it's not," Isabel argued half-heartedly, "as though she were going to a low-class—" She stopped abruptly, remembering where Isaac had first seen them.

He caught her up. "You listen to me, young 'un, and I'll tell you what's what. There ain't an excuse in the world for you kids going to a place like Vic MacLaughlin's, except that you don't know what it is. If I thought my kid understood half of what she seen there—well, I'd rather see her dead, so help me, God!"

"Things like this aren't wrong unless you think they are, Mr. Burnham. We just went out for a lark . . . sight-seeing. None of us meant to do anything wrong. So please don't be too hard on Susie. I'd rather you blamed us."

"I do blame you—all of you!" cried Isaac, savagely. "I give up my girl and let her ma bring her to New York so's she could meet decenter people, and all she meets is a bunch of lounge lizards, that's after her jack, and takes her to places like this." Then suddenly, "Oh, I guess you ain't altogether to blame, kiddie," he said. "Not if you got a papa that don't care. And I guess you're a plucky girl, or you wouldn't of come in when Suey was scared. . . ." Isaac Burnham removed his hands from his pockets and flung them out in a gesture of racial philosophy. "Tell her to come along," he said. "Tell her the old man ain't sore, just hurt and sorry, see? I want to take her out of all this. Tell her that, will you, heh?"

Isabel said she would, and turned thoughtfully away. An idea of Rousillon crossed her mind, and again the triumph of her new knowledge. Then she was shaking Isaac's hand, while he advised: "Keep out of these here places yourself. Habits ain't watches. They're easy to make and hard to bust. So you women are better off formin'

the old ones, and getting husbands and kids of your own. Old ideas is best, girlie, take it from an old fella."

"Thank you," said Isabel, and added, to the complete mystification of Isaac Burnham: "You have told me something tonight . . . done me a favor which I can never repay. But if I ever have a chance to do you a good turn I solemnly swear to take it. . . ."

The wheel was spinning again when she entered the room—that room so white beneath the brilliant lights, so sweet with the scent of fading roses. But the crowd about the table had thinned.

"Where is Susie?"

Cecil replied:

"She and Du Maurier toddled off just after you went in to her father."

Oddly enough, the sudden tears which stung Isabel's eyes were for Isaac rather than herself.

"Cecil," she whispered.

And Cecil was at her side.

But Isaac went as he had come, in a long grey touring car, alone.



Chapter Twenty-one

THE AFFAIR of Rousillon, upon which Isabel the woman came to look with the awe and wonder accorded to such things, played curious tricks with the mind of Isabel the girl. She chose to blame them upon the substance which had burned blue along the table top. Some sort of dope . . . hashish, perhaps . . . no wonder it had affected her memory. . . .

When she awakened with the first red rays of dawn the vision of the mountain and the well had been quite clearly in her mind; she had remembered it vividly, had almost felt the shiver that ran through her body as she touched the gate. Then she had forced herself to think of other things. . . .

Taxis . . . Du Maurier's shoulder pressing against hers, so that she could feel the vibration of his blood through

fur, cloth and skin. . . . The room in the gambling-house; Isaac Burnham uncompromisingly set off by the pure ivory walls, revealing things to Isabel, filling her with purpose and with hope. . . . Herself and Cecil's return to the studio, not talking and laughing as of old, but with a close and silent communion which indicated that, temporarily at least, the barrier was down.

Even then the vision had been clearly in her mind.

But as the room grew lighter Isabel's memory darkened. And when, at breakfast, Cecil asked her to describe what she had seen, she could only start, rub her hand across her eyes, and vaguely shake her head.

They discussed the scene between Isaac and Isabel. Cecil—consumed with curiosity concerning that man whose affairs were so closely linked with those of Harcourt, Hutchinson and Vincennes—would have given much to share her secret with Isabel. She resolved to ask Cyril Harcourt's permission to retract the promise of silence, but this morning she said nothing, cautious of spoiling these first precious moments of reunion with apparently pointless inquiries.

Isabel, who had—in spite of the trick played by her memory—started the day in an unusually elated condition, talked incessantly. "The trouble with us," she announced, "is that we don't stop to reason. We act without planning our campaigns. Now I'm going to tell you something—I've decided to accept the huntress idea in good faith. For a long time my attitude toward Susie stood in my way. But Susie's behavior last night showed her ability to take care of herself. Let her look to her laurels!" Isabel's eyes flashed, her parted lips quivered with excitement. But in another moment the inevitable reaction set in. "Oh, Cecil," she complained, "I wish I knew the way to start—hunting."

Cecil's composure cracked like paint which has been put on too thick. "That's absurd!" she broke out, in her

old magisterial manner. "Women with proper pride let men do the hunting."

"And if the men won't?"

"Then they're not worth bothering about."

Isabel put down her teacup. "You have never been in love, Cecil. That much is plain. If you had you'd understand."

Cecil, quite powerless, felt that the barrier was slipping back into place. "You had better take your troubles to someone more experienced along emotional lines—or try writing to Beatrice Fairfax," she suggested.

Isabel, perceiving the sarcasm rather than what it concealed, responded: "Perhaps I will. But it will be a strange feeling. I've never told my troubles to anyone but you."

Cecil rose briskly, eyes fixed on her wrist-watch. "I shall have to trot-trot to market," she said, thinking of the request she would make of Mr. Harcourt. "And tonight I'll have news for you, too. I suppose," she added, not without irony, "that your confidences will keep until then?"

Before noon Mrs. Fallon, the grey-haired elderly scrubwoman, arrived on her weekly visit.

"Polish," Isabel informed her father, "rhymes with demolish. I'll let her do both in her own way. Napolita phoned to say she couldn't come, so I'm taking a vacation. The place will get a thorough cleaning."

"Nonsense," said Adrian, who was in an argumentative mood, "scrubwomen never clean. Like the pretty French cocottes, they simply scrape off the top layer of paint. Besides, who cares. I hate super-cleanliness—it's so ignorant. Stiff and priggish—like Cecil."

"You seem vexed with Cecil, papa." Isabel did not know that she was the unmentioned cause of their hostilities.

"Oh, the deuce take her, and her lectures at the same time. I only hope there's an extra platform in heaven, or the Almighty will have to make way for Cecil the 'alrighty.' Whose affair is

it if I want to drink myself into the grave, instead, like most people, of eating myself into it?"

Isabel protested: "It's because of what it does now . . . the things it makes you see. . . ." She stopped short, conscious of a flood of returning memories.

Meanwhile: "That's just where you're all wrong . . . you two and the cursed doctors," Adrian was crying, in an odd, harsh voice. "It's when I don't drink that I—see—things."

"That you see the white leopard?" asked Isabel, grown very bold.

Her father looked at her keenly, and then began laughing in a manner so frightfully unpleasant, and so suggestive of unpleasant things, that Isabel resumed their former topic with unseemly haste.

"It's not super-righteousness with Cecil. I think it's only because she can't put herself in other people's places. Can't feel things in spirit that she has never felt in flesh. That's why she can't understand the way I feel—about Dick. Because she's never been in love." Isabel stole a glance at her father, and saw that he had relaxed into a listening pose. "I don't believe she's ever cared for anyone except you, and me. And Cyril Harcourt, of course."

"Not of course."

"What?"

"I said not of course. Why should Cyril Harcourt be of course?"

"Really, papa, one might think you were implying that Cecil was in love with C. H."

"You flatter me." Adrian drummed on the counterpane with one mocking fingertip. "I lack the delicacy of implication. I state that Cecil is in love with Cyril Harcourt."

"Then you state nonsense." She added rudely: "Cecil tells me everything. She wouldn't come to you, and not to me."

"She hasn't come to me," Adrian amended, with rare patience. "I'm Sherlock Holmes, Junior. I deduced it. As for you," he added contemptuously,

"you should learn to control your reactions. If I didn't know—to my own sorrow—that you were in love with a *man* I should think you jealous of Cecil. Now you'd better start on your little vacation."

Isabel apologized. She had been too quick. Cecil had something to tell her that evening. Perhaps it was this.

"She'll never tell you that," Adrian sneered.

"Then I won't believe it."

Adrian snickered, but said indifferently: "On your way out stop and see the janitress. My bell has been out of order for a fortnight. I might have died three times over with no one the wiser."

"I don't think you could die three times over under any circumstances," Isabel corrected amiably. "Unless you had nine lives, like a cat."

A dark flush spread over Adrian's face. "Out with you," he growled. "You and your cats." And so busy was Isabel speculating about her father's objection to the family *Felidae*, that she quite forgot to see the janitress on her way out.

THE fine weather kept. The sun rode high in the heavens, and a crisp wind blew out of the west. Isabel, walking up Fifth Avenue, drew buoyancy and vigor into her lungs with the fresh air, and, watching the people she passed on her way, made idle speculations as to their lives and ambitions.

This was the season of the flapper's triumph. Forward and back, splashing the side streets, spotting the avenue, flowed the endless stream. Suits of tweed or homespun in blue; green, lavender, warm rose, fluttered like butterflies against a background of grim stone.

Isabel was stirred to envy by the happy faces underneath the soft felt hats.

They had love and life, these youngsters: beneath their Bramley collars throbbed staunch hearts; their galoshes were unhooked above feet eager for experience. All their bobbed curls, their detestable slang, their painted

mouths, could not take from them the heritage of the race. They would pass into maturity; bear children; forget that once they, too, had been the wild and free; raise outraged hands at the antics of some newer generation, and repeat the ancestral refrain: "*We didn't do that when we were young.*"

Someone had once quoted quite a long passage to Isabel, and now, oddly enough, it came to her in its entirety:

"These children are Pandoras whose curiosity has led them to fling open the forbidden chest of the knowledge of good and evil. They have turned out much that is terrible, upon the world, and upon themselves, but they have found hope. Hope of a saner, stronger race, of a decency no longer based upon ignorance, of a maternity no longer based upon accident. . ."

"A maternity no longer based upon accident. . . ." Everywhere it recurred, that hint of design, of plan behind the chaos of being. And now, too, Isabel remembered from whom she had heard the lines. It had been her aunt, Mrs. French, who had quoted them.

Mrs. French, that woman of vast and colorful experience! Like one in a dream Isabel hailed a passing cab, jumped in, and gave the driver an address on West Fifty-ninth Street. Then, with a sigh, she sank back into the cushioned seat, and delivered herself to fate.



Chapter Twenty-two

SUSIE BURNHAM turned a tear-wet face into her pillow, and wailed aloud in her remorse: "Oh, why did I do it? Why did I do it? Isabel will never forgive me, and she's the only person I care for. Oh, if only I weren't so helpless, so dreadfully helpless. . . ." her body was shaken with sobs so terrible that they were a luxury, and "Oh, God!" she cried, "I'm so miserable!"

Then the voice of Olive Burnham sounded close to the bed.

"You've put your foot in it this time, my girl," said Olive, and held out a telegram to her daughter.

Susie dried her eyes with a lace edged handkerchief, and pushing the massed hair from her forehead began to read.

Slowly the bright red color left her cheeks.

"Oh, how horrid," she finally cried, and crumpled up the yellow sheet. "How beastly unfair to take away my present because I tried to get one little evening's amusement . . ." and flinging herself across the bed, she resumed her weeping with redoubled violence.

"I wish I'd never been born," she cried wildly. "I wish I'd never been born. I've seen nothing but fighting and unhappiness all my life. I've had to struggle for every little bit of pleasure I've ever had. I don't want to hurt anybody, but I'm being forced to do it every day. Oh, if there is any God at all, he is cruel and bad! Cruel and bad I say! I wish I'd never been born. People like you and Daddy have no right to have children."

"That's it," enunciated Olive, in a strangled voice, "show your gratitude for all we've done. Blame us for your own rotten disposition. Ingrate!"

Then she turned and went swiftly out of the room, choking back sobs. For in the bottom of her heart, she feared that Susie was right. All during the morning the sound of weeping came from Susie's room, and at lunch-time Olive went across the street to Sherry's, where she put in a call to Philadelphia. Isaac had just returned to his office, and was in one of his more reasonable moods. After ten minutes Olive hung up the receiver and returned impassively to the apartment.

"I had another telegram," she lied, caressing Susie's hair. "Your father has reconsidered. He says you shall have the bracelet if you swear to behave in the future. And also," Olive added, grudgingly enough, "He said to 'excuse yourself' to the little girl he saw last

night...that aside from us she's the best friend you've got."

"Oh, I know it, mother, I know it," cried Susie, smiling through her tears. "I'm going right out and send her the biggest bunch of orchids in New York."

Tightening her lips, Olive turned away.

"You never send me orchids," she said, in her old sarcastic manner. "But then I'm only your mother. . . ."

OF THE TWO daughters born to that bigoted New England landowner, Stackpole Thackeray, Veronica, the younger and prettier, was the first to marry. At fifteen she had flirted childishly with Cyril Harcourt, and announced her intention of becoming his wife—"when they grew up." But a year later Geoffrey Warren French, who had made and gambled away and remade several good-sized fortunes, came to the Connecticut farm to see old Stackpole on business. When he returned to New York he took Veronica with him.

Veronica's enemies said that she had married an old reprobate for his money. Veronica's sister thought she had been swept off her feet in admiration of the great Geoffrey French, who had been the lover of kings' mistresses. But Cyril Harcourt knew only that the little girl whom he had loved was tied to a drunkard and a swine. They all agreed, with varying degrees of emotion, that it would end badly. And they were right.

In the three and a half years of her marriage to Geoffrey French, Veronica changed in many ways. She became more brilliantly vivacious, more recklessly gay. And her hair—which had been as yellow as corn-silk—became white as white chalk. Nevertheless she turned a disarmingly compliant face toward the eyes of gossip, and when, at the outset of her fourth year of conjugal stress she ascertained Geoffrey's infidelity, she spoke one improper word he had taught her, swearing to pay him back his own coin. It was Cyril Harcourt who, against his

own interests, reasoned with her. But Veronica had always been stubborn!

A month later a kind friend stopped Geoffrey Warren French in one of his many clubs, and whispered something in his ear. Geoffrey's red face grew redder; his eyes bulged apoplectically in their sockets; he knocked his kind friend down the stairs; then dropped in his tracks like a dead bear.

When a decent interval had elapsed, and the affairs of Geoffrey—who had left every penny to his dear wife—were settled, Cyril Harcourt again asked Veronica for her hand. That it was slightly soiled he did not choose to notice. He said it meant nothing to him:

"But it means a great deal to me, Cyr'l," she asserted. "I've formed bad habits, and, what is worse, I like them." So his pleadings were vain. "I'm too fond of you to ruin your life, Cyr'l," she told him. "There is no hope. I will never change."

"Nor will I," Cyril Harcourt promised. "I will always be waiting."

And for twenty years he had kept his word, while Veronica grew wiser by far and no less lovely. Cyril was stubborn, too.

This was the woman whom Cecil did not like, and to whom Isabel went for counsel.

Mrs. French received her niece in the Directoire drawing-room of the little apartment where she lived with her maid and her Pekingese. There were long French windows across one side of the room, with a cushioned seat at their base, from which one could see the park; a miniature Japanese garden far below. It was there, with her back to the light, that Isabel sat and talked.

Mrs. French listened quietly, stroking the large silken ears of Ming, who slumbered on her knees. Only occasionally did she interrupt with an adroit question, and Isabel replied a little guardedly, taking care to conceal the name of her hero. At length, when Isabel had come to the end of a characteristic anecdote, Mrs. French smiled slowly.

"My dear child," she murmured, with her eyes bent upon Ming's glossy head, "I see that you have made the fatal error of falling in love with Richard ... Du Maurier."

Isabel started. "Have you known him long, Aunt Veronica? Do you know anything at all about him?"

"Don't you?" And Mrs. French bent a keen, ironic glance upon her niece.

"Oh ... I mean about his family!" Isabel replied.

Mrs. French laughed. "I've known all about him for years. In fact, my dear girl, I knew him as a little urchin in 'shorts' when his assured and already epigrammatic utterances started to be a great bore to his family. He severed connections with them some seasons ago."

"But he's quite all right?" Isabel cried, making no effort to conceal her delight. "What a relief!"

"Little snob! I thought true love disregarded such trifling matters."

"It will please me to gloat about it before Cecil," Isabel confessed. "She was taken down a peg yesterday when she heard he was a cousin of Colin Vincennes' wife. Cecil is sure he is a confidence man."

"Cecil is sure of a good many things," Mrs. French averred, somewhat dryly. "But even Cecil can make an error."

Isabel was too immersed in her own reflections to resent her aunt's tone.

"And now," Mrs. French resumed, "go on with your story . . . What happened when you got into the little room with Rousillon?"

"Well ... he told me to give way to some thought that was in the bottom of my mind, and I asked him what the thought was. After making me say I was not afraid—which was a darned lie because I was shaking so that my knees knocked together—he promised to show me. He burned some stuff like incense ... only it wasn't incense ... and I got very sleepy and then ... and then ..."

"What did you see?"

"I ... I ..." Isabel suddenly went very cold, and put her hand to her forehead.

"I don't know," she said in a frightened voice. "I can't remember. This ..." she tried to sound as though she did not take the matter seriously. "This is the second time it's happened. I started to tell Cecil this morning, and I couldn't then, either. Only I remembered as soon as she'd gone. Oh, Aunt Veronica, what do you suppose it means?"

"I don't suppose it means anything, child," replied Mrs. French, rather sharply, for her. She had intended a flippant remark, but in the face of Isabel's pale anxiety she could not think of none. "We all have these experiences at some time or another. I remember once about fifteen years ago, when I went to Olga Kotchevska, in Paris. She was the most famous medium of her time, and ..." Mrs. French launched into an imaginative story, which, although not a word of it was true, had the effect of comforting Isabel immeasurably.

"What a fortunate chance I came to you," the young girl finally cried, her equilibrium completely restored by Mrs. French's treatment. "I feel encouraged already!"

Mrs. French raised slender hands in mock horror. "I didn't mean to encourage you," she insisted. "You couldn't have chosen a worse person to fall in love with. You can't use the same sort of coquetry with Dick that would be effective with other men. It's all old stuff with him."

"I'll be as patient as ... as Grizelda. I'll do anything."

"You'll probably have to."

Slowly the color came back into Isabel's face. "Do you ... do you think I ought to take the aggressive part?" she asked abruptly. "Do you think the woman is really the huntress?"

Mrs. French gave an almost malicious jerk to the ear of Ming, who jumped off her lap and trotted, coughing crossly, to a distant corner of the room. "You aren't such an innocent babe, after all," she exclaimed. "Or else ... who put that idea into your head?"

"Papa."

"Mm ... Well ... I thought perhaps

it was Du Maurier himself. It would be so like him to give you a hint." She was silent for a moment. "I think the woman is the huntress in spirit," she said presently. "But to put the matter badly, her method must be to trap, rather than to spear openly. The man must have the illusion that it is he who takes the initiative."

A maid, very pretty in her soft mauve uniform and frilled organdie apron, announced luncheon. Isabel got up and reached for her coat.

"Don't be absurd," Veronica warned with a little, imperious gesture. "I have had a place laid for you. There, that's it, not a word." And she led the way into a tiny room furnished in black lacquer and yellow silk.

"We'll have to get at this from the other end," Mrs. French announced, as she nibbled a piece of celery. "Tell me more about this girl... this Susie person."

"She isn't malicious, or deliberate," Isabel tried to explain. "And she's so spoiled and helpless that it makes me feel guilty to do anything that would hurt her. Taking a man away from Susie is rather like taking a bone away from Ming."

"But from what you say I judge that she has quite a collection of—bones."

"Yes, and she's sure to feel that the one that's taken away is the best of the lot."

"You've said enough. I know the girl already. Now then, hark unto my words of wisdom."

"I'm harking."

"And don't reproach me afterwards for being a nasty cynical old woman."

"I shan't."

"Now, first of all, a question. Do you know any man with lot of money, and no prejudices against her type? He would have to be reasonably vulgar, of course, but that wouldn't matter if he were susceptible—and attractive."

Isabel looked up in blank amazement from her creamed mushrooms. "No—

where on earth," she queried, "would such a person be found?"

"There must be thousands of them in this very cosmopolitan city. Any enterprising young woman could certainly find one."

"Well I don't know where... unless," and Isabel chuckled aloud. "You would like me to cultivate Mr. Wadsworth Silverstein."

Mrs. French wrinkled up her nose. "Who the deuce is Wadsworth Silverstein?"

Isabel explained.

"That's your man, my dear. You'll simply have to set your beastly little snobbisms to one side and accept him. If he lacks a bit of veneer it's up to you to polish him off before you introduce him to Miss—what is her name?"

"Burnham."

"Burnham?" Veronica actually stopped with a fork in midair. "Didn't you say her father was a broker?"

"Yes, but you wouldn't know him. Firstly, he's from Philadelphia, and secondly he's—well, the name of his firm is Burnham and Levy."

The fork descended.

"To get back to our subject," said Mrs. French, as the maid removed the dishes, "you must call up this Goldstein—"

"Silverstein."

"—Silverstein, then, at once."

"I can't do that," cried Isabel, "you don't realize what sort of a person he is."

Mrs. French answered sarcastically, "Dear me! So that is your way of 'doing anything.' You—Grizelda indeed! If I am to have any share in this, my advice is to be followed to the letter. Now listen." And she began to outline a plan which, after considerable argument, impressed Isabel with its possibilities. By the time they had finished luncheon Isabel was distinctly wavering in her resolve to have nothing, nothing whatsoever, to do with Wadsworth Silverstein.

"I'll have to think it over," she said.

"I still can't bear the idea of calling that person up. He's sure to misinterpret my motives."

"So much the better—or no—be frank with him. He's intelligent enough to see that it will be to his advantage as well as yours." Veronica French slipped an arm about Isabel's shoulders. "Buck up, old girl," she advised. "Nothing is ever worth the trouble we go to get it, but the effort is what makes life amusing."

In the outer hallway, Isabel paused. "There was a quotation you once showed me," she remarked. "And I'd like to know where it came from." She repeated a line.

Mrs. French laughed for no calculable reason. "Tell the elevator to wait a moment," and she went back into the apartment. When she returned she held a book in her hand. "Here you are," she said. "It's Lenox Madden's latest book. 'The Younger Generation.' Read it carefully. And be sure," she admonished, "to let me know what it tells you."

The elevator clanked to a stop.

"Goodbye," said Isabel, "and thanks again."

"You are quite welcome," her aunt replied graciously. "Better call Mr. Goldstein this afternoon."

When the elevator had gone she closed the door quietly. "Hendrix," she called to her maid, "get Mr. Harcourt's secretary on the telephone. I wish to speak to her."



Chapter Twenty-three

CYRIL HARCOURT had been occupied all morning and Cecil had let him go out to lunch without requesting him to release her from her promise. Before he came back she received a telephone call from Veronica French, and in direct consequence of that call her request never was made.

"Evidently," Cecil said to herself, "Isabel's confidences would not keep."

And she concluded fiercely, "It isn't fair. It isn't fair."

She was wounded to the quick. And, although she resolved to conceal her resentment, something of it crept into her expression, tightening her lips so that—"What's biting you?" inquired Colin Vincennes, who sat on his partner's desk and dangled his legs. "You look as though you had eaten a worm..." And he began to misquote cheerfully, "Worms have died, and men have eaten them—but not for love."

Cecil slammed the telephone onto the desk with unrepressed fury. "Oh that aunt of mine!" she brought out between clenched teeth. "Oh, the criminal dumbness of some people."

"What's the row? Something about this Burnham and Levy business?"

"So C. H. told you about it?"

"Yes. That it was her own pig-headedness that caused it, but that she expected him to fix it up."

"The wretched part," groaned Cecil, "is that he's dying to fix it up." She dropped into the nearest chair and added earnestly, "So am I. Anything to hear the last of it."

"What did auntie say?"

"Did you know that the man who followed us to the gambling place was the Burnham in question?"

"What? Little red-head's father?"

"Yes."

Colin emitted a long low whistle.

"And Isabel had lunch with Aunt Veronica, and let out that fact. And the darned old woman seems to think that because I know his daughter I can go up to the man and say, 'Here, you crook, hand me the ten thousand dollars that you stole from my aunt—' and get the money too! She's such an aggravating person!"

"Who's such an aggravating person, my dear?" enquired Mr. Harcourt, who had caught the end of the sentence as he came in. And to Colin—"Get off my desk, you young scamp... there's a client of yours waiting outside."

Colin went, sighing mournfully. "I

wish these men would stop bothering me with their orders to buy one minute and sell the next. All I get out of it anyway is hats for the wife...."

When he had gone, Cecil repeated the substance of her conversation with Mrs. French to her employer. In spite of her efforts, there were tears of anger and chagrin in her eyes as she finished rebelliously: "I hate not being able to do anything. It's unbearable. And then, to be reproached for it!"

"Oh, Veronica doesn't mean it," Mr. Harcourt soothed, and Cecil writhed inwardly at the tenderness of his voice. "We are tied, Cecil. We haven't a leg to stand on, as long as we are forbidden to act officially."

"But couldn't you go over to Philadelphia... see the district attorney... get him to keep an eye on their central office? They'll be bound to trip themselves up sooner or later."

"Unless someone warns them, and they pull the great trump of all those fellows: Transfer their assets into their wives' names, and file a petition in bankruptcy." Mr. Harcourt smiled, shook his head. "You lead me astray, Cecil. I couldn't do anything of the sort. You're so full of zeal that you forget my official limitations. I'm not the President of the Stock Exchange, Cecil. I'm not even on the Board of Governors. I am merely a member in good standing."

Cecil cut in impatiently, more to keep the conversation going than anything else: "But you don't have to advertise your actions, C. H."

"I'm old fashioned, Cecil. I have principles. Also, I have some important letters to dictate."

Cecil's heart seemed to contract.

"I'm ready," she said, getting up and taking the black oilcloth cover off her typewriter. And then, "C. H." she cried, with a sudden glow of excitement, "Would it offend your principles if I were to take a hand, a wholly—let us say unprofessional—hand, in this matter?"

"Just what do you mean?"

"I could go to Philadelphia myself,

if you trusted me enough. But not as Cyril Harcourt's secretary, you understand. Simply as the niece of the injured Mrs. French, someone personally interested. Oh, C. H.," Cecil begged, "give me a chance. I ask it as a favor, not only for her sake, but for the sake of my own pride."

A warm look of gratitude was her reward.

"You shall have your chance, my dear, never doubt that, and you know quite well that I trust you absolutely. Give me time to think it over."

That was how it happened that later in the day, when Isabel asked Cecil what her bit of news was, Cecil replied coldly: "Nothing except that I'm leaving at once for Philadelphia...."

MEANWHILE, Isabel was spared the humiliation of calling up Wadsworth Silverstein.

She did some shopping, and when she returned to the studio, she found him there, squirming under the suspicious scrutiny of Anastasie.

"I am sure glad you arrived," he declared. "I'd just about given up the ship. That maid of yours makes me feel like what the Bible calls a thief in the night." Without further preliminaries he came to the point of his visit. "Look here," he asked, "have you seen this fellow Potter in the last few days?"

"No. We expected him to join a party last night, but he didn't turn up. Wasn't he at work today?"

"He was not. And not on Saturday either. On Friday he blew in about eleven forty-five, all lit up like the Metropolitan Tower. I told him to go home, and I'd stop round and have words with him after business hours. Well, when I got to his place, the landlady said he hadn't been around there for a couple of days—she seemed kind of upset herself, seeing he not only owed rent, but had cashed a cheque on a bank where he hadn't any account."

"How beastly!" Isabel colored, as though she herself were responsible for Potter's defection.

"No one I know of has laid eyes on him since," Silverstein concluded.

"What do you suppose has happened to him?"

Silverstein outlined his impressions, which were neither alarming to Isabel nor complimentary to Potter. "I guess he's worn out his credit," Silverstein summed up. "And has gone on to what the movies call 'new fields of endeavor.'" He added reflectively, perhaps even with a hint of admiration, "He sure was the shark's elbows, was that boy. Stale bread never has crust like his."

"I'm sorry it all happened," Isabel said, although, for her own sake, she was delighted. "I can't help feeling a certain responsibility."

Silverstein reached for his hat and coat. "Don't let it worry you," he advised. "He'll be popping up again, soused as ever. Hope I haven't troubled you, but I thought you ought to know."

Isabel gathered up what courage she had. "Surely," she said with a smile that startled Silverstein by its frank cordiality, "you won't leave without having a cup of tea. I should be so . . . disappointed."

Like most disagreeable situations, this one was less alarming in fact than in fancy. Silverstein did not drink out of his saucer, nor talk like a certain distinguished Frenchman of Isabel's acquaintance, with his mouth full of toast. On the contrary, his manners were charming, and when the first strained half hour was over, Isabel found, to her astonishment, that she was genuinely interested in this novel specimen of the *genus homo*.

Discussion between Isabel and Silverstein was rendered difficult by the disparity of their points of view. The Jews Isabel had known were Jews nominally rather than denominationally. Wealth, background, and intelligence had made them cosmopolitan, and much of her unreasoning prejudice had been derived from their own attitudes. For of that vast majority of clever and ambitious Jewish immigrants, which Silverstein represented, Isabel knew nothing

except that collectively they were the ugliest, noisiest, and most objectionable people she had ever seen. And this, after all, was the class about which they attempted to argue.

"We are living in an age where cash counts first and last," Silverstein said. "It's what makes the engine go. And we've got it."

"You have certainly a great deal of it," Isabel admitted, placidly sipping tea. "But—" thinking of Susie's extravagance, "do you know what to do with it? You put it in diamonds. . . ."

"Safe as a bank, my friend," said Silverstein. "My countrymen started it in the days before they were good enough for the banks. Diamonds have a standard value and can be turned into collateral at times when stocks are just so much scrap-paper."

"But even granting the financial prestige, can you buy social position?"

"Sure you can. The common Irish have done it. Why shouldn't the common Jews? Who is there to stop them?"

Isabel felt the defiant bitterness behind Silverstein's words. "You are stopped," she answered after a brief consideration, "by your own limitations. The Irish are not."

"The two races are much alike," said Silverstein, with one of those small flashes of insight which were peculiarly his own. "They are both combined poets and peddlers. But the Irish are lazy."

"And the Jews," Isabel said, "are greedy. The very temperament that hungers for beauty will be forever barred by the ambition which drives you too fast. And most of all you will be held back by the clannishness which makes you, in the ultimate instance, hold yourself apart from the fellow-citizen who is not also a fellow Jew."

"That is how we have kept our identity through all these hundreds of years."

"And to what end? You have set yourself apart to be reviled, where once you were revered . . . and all for an infantile racial self-consciousness."

"Just what do you mean? Say it slowly, and in shorter words."

"I mean the sort of thing that makes Jews get angry when they see the 'Merchant of Venice.' Iago was as great a villain as Shylock, but Italians don't consider him an indictment of their entire nation."

"Neither," Silverstein pointed out, shrewdly enough, "does anyone else."

"That's so."

"And where," Silverstein queries, "do the high class 'ladies and gents' come in . . . the ones you told me on Christmas Eve were so superior?"

Isabel sat for a while, pondering.

"I believe," she replied presently, "that the end of the Jewish race as a separate unit—a respected and honored unit—has definitely come. You will find that the very best of them—the ones you ask about—are taking the side of Christianity, not as a religion, but as an abstract ideal. Taking the side of the cultured and"—Isabel smiled faintly—"cultivated 'Gentile,' rather than the ignorant and vulgar Jew who has emigrated in such bulk as to completely inundate the rest. You will find them intermarrying and merging with the Anglo-Saxon, as already they have done in England; losing their racial identity in the creation of a new and splendid cross-breed, a breed much like the Latin-American in its infinite possibilities."

"Wonderful!" Silverstein leaned forward. "Yes, we can give you the virility of our minds, and you can give us the strength of your bodies . . . it will be a super-race!" He dropped back abruptly, and added with ironic humor, "I forget. I am not one of the chosen few." Isabel said nothing; and, after a pause: "What," drawled Silverstein, "becomes of the rest? The ones editorials call the common herd?"

Isabel did not know. "They will be a very difficult problem," she prophesied. "For even though they advance a distance along the lines you have predicted, they will eventually revert to their own class and creed." Her voice trembled a little, and Silverstein sensed

for the first time the strong personal motive behind her change of attitude.

"You think so?"

"I hope so," was what she almost said. Instead, she nodded vigorously.

"Perhaps," Silverstein conceded. "That also is good. Because if it's going to be war, and that's the gist of your argument, then it's best that we keep our munitions"—pausing, Silverstein twisted his diamond ring on his index finger—"in our own fort, eh?"

He looked at her with an expression which mingled shrewdness and humor. Isabel had the sharp sensation of being transparent; she felt that in their hour of conversation she had made no steps toward accomplishing her purpose, unless a series of comprehensive insults to Silverstein's class could be counted. Moreover, she felt that she had made a serious mistake in letting Silverstein surmise that she had a motive at all. There was now no path open but that of brutal candor.

But on that field, unexpectedly, Silverstein met her gaily enough.

"The basis of all friendship," he expounded—Isabel wished Du Maurier could hear this epigram—"is utility. I like you," he went on, "but. . . ."

Isabel felt his clear grey eyes piercing through her breasts, the points of which were faintly visible beneath a soft crepe gown. "You aren't the type I go in for—physically." He moved his hand, and Isabel was aware of an infinite sensuality which was as yet latent in Silverstein. "You're too thin," he said frankly. "There's not enough of you. So you needn't fear I'll get—fresh."

She was, in spite of herself, mildly resentful. No woman likes that type of candor: no woman likes being told she is not physically alluring, even to a man she scorns. But there was no time for further parley. Two knocks at the door resounded in swift succession, the first heralding the arrival of the orchids which Susie had promised earlier in the day, and which Isabel, with a rather mocking smile, pinned to her dress; the second announcing the unexpected arri-

val of Du Maurier and his cousin, Andrea Dartie.

DU MAURIER had spent a restless night. He sensed that the part he had played at the gambling-house was not a gallant one. Moreover, he had been disappointed in his expectations of Susie. They had arrived at the darkened apartment on Park Avenue at about the time Isabel was emerging from her illuminating encounter with Isaac Burnham. Susie had not turned on the lights—she did not, she said, wish to wake up her mother. In the greenish sombreness her body had yielded itself to Du Maurier's embrace, inviting, conscious of its allure. He remembered her hair, filled with a confused odor of tobacco smoke mingled with expensive perfume—an odor that revolted his fastidiousness and awakened his passion. He had kissed her; she had confessed that she loved him, and he had wanted her little rounded body, wanted it sharply and poignantly for himself. . . .

And Du Maurier, startled and made afraid, had left almost abruptly, knowing, in his heart of hearts, that Susie had attempted a deliberate misinterpretation of his motives, that she was angling, with her body as bait, for a proposal of marriage. Du Maurier hated women who put a price upon their virginity.

At home, in the still little room where Achilles rubbed against the knees of a tired and disgusted master, Du Maurier's thoughts had turned with something of regret, something of shame, to Isabel. And that afternoon, when he came to the studio, it was with an idea, vague, but none the less existent, of making amends. . . .

The sight of Silverstein pulled him up as a check-rein pulls up a fractious pony.

There was an awkward and dismal silence which even the exciting morsel of news about Stockbridge Potter failed to dissipate.

"He'll reappear before tomorrow night," Du Maurier predicted, his eyes flitting from Silverstein's diamond ring

to the vast bouquet at Isabel's waist. "He won't miss Susie's dinner. Knows he'll get plenty to eat—and to drink." He waived aside the cream pitcher which Isabel held in a hand made steady by a violent effort of will. "By the way, there was a message from Susie—you were to bring your own man. She wants to have a few 'stags'."

Isabel felt her throat contracting. Wondered vaguely whether she could force words upward and out through dry lips. Desire and diplomacy wrestled for a supremacy.

"Why, how nice, Dick," Isabel said. "Will you stop and pick me up on your way?"

Pause.

"So sorry," said Du Maurier, "but I promised Susie to go up early and help arrange the flowers."

White sparks of humiliation crossing the black cloud of despair. Then strength came back to Isabel in a flash which, in almost every particular, approximated genius.

With a shrug of rather humorous disappointment, "Spurned!" she laughed. She turned to Silverstein beaming, almost pastorally shy, "I'd ask you," she said in a voice of nectar and ambrosia, "only you don't know the girl, and I couldn't bear another refusal."

"You wouldn't get one."

"No? Oh, would you really go? But how awfully sweet of you," Isabel exclaimed, laying her hand on Silverstein's arm. "You put me into your debt—but I shall promise to pay it off by giving you an excellent time."

"Judas . . ." thought Richard Du Maurier, seized by a complete revulsion. "If my sainted mother could see the people I'm getting in with she'd turn in her grave. . . ."

Andrea Dartie, wise and self-possessed, slipped her arm through his. "I had intended waiting for Colin," she told Isabel. "He's driving your sister up from the office. But it's getting rather late. Dick has offered to convey me to my palatial residence on the other side of the square, so I think we'll be off."

Outside, crossing the bare space of grassless gardens and leafless trees which were the winter garments of Washington Square, Andrea said:

"Dick, you are a cad. If any man treated me as you have treated that child who adores you. . . .

"You'd know well enough what to do, Andrea. You are what is commonly known as a 'wise bird'."

"Well, there are limits to selfishness, my friend."

"And you have discovered one of them?"

She laughed upward, into his face. "You are past master of the pleasant art of insult, Mr. Madden."

Du Maurier's hand closed rudely over her wrist. "Not Mr. Madden, if you please."

"Mademoiselle Grizelda does not know who you are, then?" And she added as he made a sharp negative gesture. "She has one of your novels in a conspicuous place on her table. 'The Younger Generation'—your latest, is it not?"

"My latest," Du Maurier released his cousin's wrist, laughing softly down at her. "No. Not my latest. That is not quite complete, as yet. But when it is, Miss Rayburn will not have it on her table, for all that it is her own story, and . . ." the ring of triumph vibrated in his throat. "And my best, Andrea, my very best."

She did not answer him at once. In fact, not until they stood between the white columns of the doorway, in one of those charming Colonial houses which still line the north side of the Square, did she say: "Truly, literature is the most cruel of the sciences. Not only do you openly dissect—but you openly dissect living creatures. Have you no mercy, Dick?"

"Mercy?" Du Maurier's cheeks darkened a shade. "You talk to me of mercy, Andrea, who have never acted on a generous impulse in all your twenty-two years of life."

The composer calmly turned her latch key in the lock, and swept imperiously past a rather startled second butler.

"Evidently," she remarked, "it's a family failing." But he had touched her in a vulnerable spot, and she was silent until he himself reopened the conversation.

"That sleek little garment maker," he protested. "You'll confess she should have done better than that."

Andrea paused in the midst of lighting a long slender cigarette. "I also think you could have done better than that red-headed chippy."

"But look here, Andrea, it's different with a man. A woman always has marriage at the back of her head. With me it's an affair. . . . The child pleases me."

"And you please her—today. But, unless I am much mistaken, Miss Rayburn believes that your sleek little garment maker, with his diamond ring, will distract her attention."

"Not very flattering, I must say," declared Du Maurier.

"My good friend, such love as hers is always flattering. Flattering and inexorable. She will not rest until she has got you to the altar. . . ."

"Not so fast," interrupted Du Maurier.

"But the girl's mad for a child. She even paints Madonnas—it's a subconscious obsession."

"Go chase your subconscious obsessions," said Du Maurier rudely. "Isabel's business in life . . ."

" . . . Is essentially that of the mother. Just as yours is essentially that of the intellectual surgeon."

"Splendid lines," mocked Du Maurier. "I shall take the liberty of using them in my new story."

In a voice of mild raillery, Andrea insisted: "You care more for your Grizelda than you wish to admit. Watch out, my dear, if you value the freedom which you have protected by an elaborate incognito. Remember that all is fair in love."

"That is not as interesting to a confirmed bachelor as it will undoubtedly be to your belated husband, who is waiting in the doorway for the conjugal welcome. . . ." And Du Maurier,

chuckling at his prowess, took advantage of Colin Vincenne's appearance to extricate himself from a conversation that was little to his taste.

Andrea's hint rankled. For all that he, and no other, had styled woman a "huntress," Du Maurier did not care to view himself as a "marked-down victim." For the moment he hated both Susie and Isabel. The temptation to pack his bags and accept an invitation to spend the rest of the winter with a friend at Palm Beach was strong. But along with the temperament of the author, there goes more than an ordinary amount of curiosity. He decided to wait, at least until after Susie's party, and, having made the decision, strolled up Fifth Avenue in leisurely fashion like a man who has not a care in the world.



Chapter Twenty-four

HE WAITED for Susie's party with the intention of passing final judgment upon his hostess and upon Isabel.

Before setting out he gave himself half an hour to review the past and prepare for the future. At one time, he could now confess, he had been very much in love with Isabel. Dangerously in love, for while Du Maurier's income was sufficient for his needs, marriage would certainly necessitate considerable changes in a satisfactory scheme of life. Therefore, when the desire to propose formally to Isabel had become too urgent, he had taken the precaution of spending two weeks away from her at Hot Springs, and on the day of his return he had met Susie. Susie, with her frank desire to please, her play upon ready sympathies, her blinding bonfire of hair. Du Maurier had not realized at first that Susie also would expect to be married. . . .

ARRIVING early, perhaps for the first time in his career of dinners, Du Maurier found Susie waiting in the drawing-room. A sheath of green-blue

metal cloth enclosed her plump body, and her fingers encircled a fan of peacock feathers with a golden handle. At sight of her Du Maurier's resolute detachment was forgotten. He caught her in his arms, drawing her up against the stiff shirt-front which made a hissing sound against her skin.

"Oh, don't, Du Maurier—my dress will be ruined!"

Under the strident irritation of her rebuff his ardor cooled as swiftly as a snuffed candle.

Released, Susie purred at him, "Aren't cross, are you, darling? Lamé crushes so. . . ."

Barbara opportunely announced Mr. and Mrs. Cheever, Larry Sanville and his sister, Mrs. Dalgren. Du Maurier could not but smile at the crumbling of social barriers which permitted conservatives like the Dalgrens and the Cheevers, representing the most solid and most sober element of New York's baby aristocracy, to take up a rank outsider like Susie. Yet he, who might well have entered through the wide gate, had slipped through those same barriers, and to all but a very few Du Maurier reminded himself, he was as unknown as Isaac Burnham's daughter.

Barbara ushered in Mr. Wowse, followed by a round of cocktails. Barbara ushered in Miss Ruthie Vane and her four admirers, then a second round of cocktails. Du Maurier, mentally noting the impropriety of inviting odd men to dinner, walked to the window and looked downward fourteen stories to the lamplit street below. Looked until the visions that painted themselves upon the darkness became unbearable. Then he turned away, cursing the crumbling social barriers that allowed a girl like Isabel to thrust herself alone in a taxi with a manufacturer of superior suits.

He had lighted a dozen cigarettes and thrown them, unsmoked, into the fireplace when Isabel and her escort finally strolled in. For some reason that he would not analyze, Isabel's calm complacency annoyed and angered him. He was relieved when he found himself seated next to Susie, with Isabel and

Silverstein at the other end of the table.

Isabel, already disappointed by the same arrangement of couples which had afforded Du Maurier relief, found her plans impeded by the very person she had chosen for their advancement. Silverstein, wary of making a wrong move, maintained an absolute silence, nor did he by word or action capture the smallest particle of his hostess' notice. Susie occupied herself with Du Maurier, with champagne, and with Ruthie Vane's Cuban on her other side. Silverstein watched her as though fascinated, neglected the very excellent dinner with which he had been provided at vast expense, and consistently refused to be drawn into even the most trivial conversation. The fact that owing to Cecil's absence their party numbered thirteen, seemed to Isabel an omen of perennial failure.

The dinner dragged on—with dancing to the tune of the player-piano between every course—and it was almost eleven when Susie, flushed and slightly tipsy, pushed back her chair and surveyed the table, littered with remnants of fire-crackers, favors and food.

"Awful," wailed Susie, who had a way of speaking of herself in the third person after the third drink. "Susie gets sad when she looks at it. Very depressing sight. Very." Whereupon she seized a corner of the cloth, gave a mighty tug, and went down in a clatter of dishes and applause."

Du Maurier laughed with the rest, and helped excavate Susie from under the débris, where she lay on her stomach with her face in a dish of ice-cream.

"Look at your dress now," he whispered, bending over her.

By way of answer Susie put her arms about his neck, swung clear of the floor, and pecked him on the chin, leaving a smudge of chocolate sauce.

Silverstein alone did not share in the general mirth, but leaned against the piano, watching Susie with an expression which Isabel could not fathom.

"What's the matter?" she finally inquired, *sotto voce*. "Don't you like our hostess?"

"Like her?" Silverstein turned to Isabel, and she saw that his eyes, wells that they were of deep and sensuous emotion, had become widely dilated. "Like her?" Silverstein reiterated. "Girlie, I'm suffering from what the psychoanalysts call love at first sight."

"Then why on earth don't you go and talk to her?"

Silverstein pursed up his lips. "Because I'm waiting for my opportunity."

At this moment Susie was heard to say: "We'll have to call a flock of taxis. Mother has the car."

Silverstein's opportunity had come.

"Say," he interrupted in his agreeable drawl, "as the novels put it—my Rolls-Royce waits below. It's only a little limousine, but I guess a few of us can pile in."

It could not be said that Susie ran to Silverstein's side. On the contrary, she walked slowly, with a rolling and dignified gait. And, "Gee," she enquired genially, as she took Silverstein's arm, "where have you been all my life, anyway?"



Chapter Twenty-five

"CYR'L," said Mrs. French, "I believe you are the only man in Montmartre with tails on. You are so adorably old-fashioned, Cyr'l, so *comme il faut*. It almost makes me weep when I think what I might have been if—"

"You might still be, you know."

"Ah, Cyr'l, 'When the lamp is broken, the light in the dust lies dead.' But sometimes. . . ." Mrs. French folded up her fan, regarded it with a curious fixity. "I believe I am getting senile, Cyr'l," she resumed at length. "Senility and sentimentality have always gone hand in hand."

"Thanks," and Mr. Harcourt reminded her of the various times she had accused him of sentimentality. "I suppose I am a hopeless idealist."

"Yes. Lord only knows what perverse notion turned you toward the brokerage business. You ought to stay

home and write essays, and leave nasty monetary affairs to efficient unimaginative people—like Cecil.”

“You are jumping about in a bewildering way,” Mr. Harcourt remarked. “What have full-dress suits to do with ideals—or Cecil? Her efficiency is about to do you an excellent turn. You owe it homage.”

“People are so like their clothes,” Mrs. French replied enigmatically.

“In which case, wearing tails, I should be diabolic, which unfortunately I am not. You will have to find a better example.”

“Well, there’s Cecil with her tailored suit, and Richard Du Maurier, who always wears an opera cloak.”

“Oh . . . the chap that’s been breaking little Isabel’s heart? I don’t know him.”

“Indeed, Cyr’l, you do.” Mrs. French glanced quickly about the crowded restaurant. “You surely haven’t forgotten Courtney Madden’s clever son?”

“But I thought Lenox Madden was writing novels.”

“So he is,” said Mrs. French. “And Richard Du Maurier collects the material for them.” Mr. Harcourt started to ask another question, but she shook her head. “Not another word—look—”

Following the direction of her glance, Mr. Harcourt saw that a party was preparing to occupy a ringside table.

“You see,” concluded Mrs. French, “we speak of the devil—and lo!—he appears.”

There was silence, while the strains of an exciting rhythm throbbed about them. Then,

“Do go out and call up your house, Cyr’l,” begged Mrs. French. “I’m longing to know whether Cecil’s telegram has come.”

Mr. Harcourt rose, and Mrs. French beckoned to Isabel, who left the party and came to her. She found Isabel uncommunicative as to the success of their plan.

“At least,” said Mrs. French, “you can tell me how Dick is taking it.”

“He isn’t taking it,” replied Isabel, “he’s leaving it alone.”

“He’s jealous.”

“I don’t think so.” Isabel added, “You are used to such touching devotion, Aunt Veronica, you forget that we are not all so fortunate.”

“Meaning?”

“That I’m surprised C. H. could leave you for a moment.”

“Business,” declared Mrs. French, “is business, and comes before everything. My beau is telephoning home to see what Cecil has done about the Bur—” She stopped, placing three perfectly manicured fingers across her lips. “I was about to give away a state secret. One that Cecil—and Cyr’l, too—would wring my neck for telling.”

Isabel started to speak, but her voice would not make the grade. Recalling Adrian’s words, she began to wonder whether Cyril Harcourt had indeed transferred his affections from her aunt to her sister, and if not, what could be this secret of which she alone appeared completely ignorant. The trip to Philadelphia was most mysterious of all.

“You mustn’t expect Cecil to tell you everything, you know,” Mrs. French admonished. She continued more charitably, “No doubt you will hear about it in due time. And when you do, I can promise a thrill, for it concerns people you know intimately.”

Isabel returned to her party, filled with disturbing suspicions of Cecil, in whom her confidence was pretty well shaken, and wishing that she were near enough to overhear the conversation that took place when Cyril Harcourt rejoined her aunt.

“Did you get your wire?” Mrs. French inquired as Mr. Harcourt seated himself beside her.

“I did indeed. Cecil has seen the district attorney, and it appears that other reports supplement ours. She says an investigation will be started at once. If we get our way in this, as we probably will, the credit is hers.”

The music stopped. There was a sound of clapping, and in the brief silence that followed, a burst of shrill laughter.

"That young woman seems happy," Mr. Harcourt observed.

Mrs. French looked in the direction from which the sound had come. Susie was there, swaying in the arms of Du Maurier, and caressing his shoulder with a hand that glittered with diamonds.

"Yes," said Mrs. French, slowly unfolding her fan. "She is happy to-night, poor child. But tomorrow—alas, Cyr'l, why must there always be a tomorrow?"

AT NINE o'clock the next morning Isabel was on the job, but after unswathing the sketch, and correcting Napolita's posture, she realized that she was in no humor to work. Her mind was packed with thoughts of Susie, Silverstein, Du Maurier, Cecil and Harcourt, as if by a united effort they had pushed art into the no-man's-land of unimportant matters. In fact, Isabel, like any normal girl who would rather live than read about life, was beginning to find a career dull substitute for a lover.

She dismissed the model and went out, hoping that she might draw some of the lucid clarity of the morning into her own mind.

Five minutes later a key turned in the lock, and Cecil entered, looking tired and grimy. When Anastasie had taken the heavy pigskin bag into the bedroom to be unpacked, Cecil went to her father's apartment and looked in.

After a restless night, Adrian was even more disagreeable than usual, but added to his ill-temper there was a lassitude altogether new, a more than ordinary desire to be left to his own devices. So, when Cecil looked in, she saw him lying back on the pillows, his eyes closed, and his face as nearly in repose as it ever was.

"Adrian," she whispered.

There was no answer.

On tiptoe Cecil returned to the studio, went to the telephone, and said to the operator: "Give me Rector ten thousand." After receiving two wrong numbers and being told that her party did not answer, she was connected with

the offices of Harcourt, Hutchinson and Vincennes.

"Our Philadelphia friends," she told the senior partner, "will be arrested for bucketing before the week is up. We were not the first to complain, but they were waiting for something as definite as we gave them before pressing the investigation." There was a silence, then "No," said Cecil, "I've told nobody. Certainly not Isabel. She's very communicative these days; she might be tempted to warn Miss Susie Burnham of her father's situation, in which case . . . Yes . . . I'll come down at once. I don't like to discuss it over the telephone, especially—" she lowered her voice, "especially from here. Isabel might come in at any moment. All right, I'll be there within the hour." And she hung up the receiver.

Before leaving she took the precaution of looking at Adrian again. He still lay motionless, but a more minute inspection would have revealed that the glass at his side, full at Cecil's first visit, was now more than half empty.

The telephone was ringing when Isabel came back.

"Do you still want Rector ten thousand?" the operator inquired.

"I didn't call Rector ten thousand."

"Well, somebody did," came the reply, crossly.

Without bothering to take off her coat, Isabel hurried in to Adrian. He was sitting up.

"Has Cecil come in?" she asked.

"Yes, and gone out again."

"Did she have any news about her trip?"

"None—for me." Adrian showed no disposition to say more.

"For whom, then?"

"Her . . . employer. But then, he is the recipient of confidences not intended for the ears of . . . of the more immediate family, one might say."

"What do you mean, papa? You're so tantalizing with your evasions. What did she say? Anything that I ought to know?"

"Certainly not. Certainly not. She was most particular about keeping it

from you. In fact, she said she expected you would run right off and tell the very people who ought not to know it. I mustn't tell you any more." Adrian leered beatifically. "It wouldn't be honorable."

"Papa," declared Isabel, seating herself at the foot of his bed, "I shan't move from here until you tell me every word you heard. If there's anything to tell." She added plaintively: "I don't know when you are teasing me, papa. You have such a twisted idea of jesting."

"Twisted. The very word. Like my face. Twisted and ugly. Not precisely a face to be loved; not precisely a face to be kissed and petted, is it?" Adrian laughed. "Well, well," he went on, "Time twists all things. Trees and faces, and morals, and friendships."

"Papa," Isabel cried, in a voice that trembled in spite of her, "are you, or are you not, going to tell me the truth?"

"I believe I am. And I'll tell you why, my pigeon. Because I believe it will be useful in the consummation of your own little love affair. I believe, you know, in letting people hang themselves on their own rope. So I want to see your love affair turn out as nicely as possible. . . . Ha! ha! ha!"

Isabel got up. Instantly her father changed his tactics. In his good hand he took her two, and drew her toward him.

"I'm a horrible old man, Isabel," he said, and she realized that even now his voice could be seductive. "Like a character in a play of the Grand Guignol. But I'm fond of you, Isabel; you are my favorite. And I prove it by ministering to the white leopard . . . to your cruel love!"

"In God's name, papa," cried Isabel, "don't start white leoparding at a moment like this. Tell me about Cecil, or let me go."

"Very well. I am fortunate enough to have retained my memory." And in proof of his statement, Adrian repeated Cecil's conversation with Mr. Harcourt, unchanged except for certain minor embellishments which are

the reward of every raconteur.

"Do you mean to say that Cecil believed I would warn them?" Isabel was stupefied. "It's malicious! I won't believe it." Her voice trembled. "I'll find out," she wailed savagely. "I'll make it my business to find out. And if it's true, I'll do just what they feared. I'll pay my debt of gratitude to Isaac Burnham, and punish Cecil, too. I will, I will!"

"That's right," commented Adrian placidly. "Kill two birds with one stone." But Isabel was already out of earshot, frantically ringing a Plaza number, which Adrian recognized as that of Mrs. French. Evidently Isabel was not long in getting the desired corroboration. For hardly a moment later Adrian heard the outer door bang.

He was left alone, with the satisfactory knowledge that he had not erred in counting on Isabel's reckless impulsiveness to carry out the business of vengeance which he himself had conceived.

SUSIE was in bed when Isabel flung herself into the room, and, bending over, cried excitedly: "Is your father in New York?"

"Why . . . yes . . . I think so. But, Isabel darling, what on earth is all the excitement about?"

"Never mind what it's about," Isabel put in curtly. "You'll know in good time. Tell me the address of your father's office, and stay here until you hear from one of the two of us."

Unwilling to abandon her newly awakened curiosity, yet unable to resist the authority of Isabel's tone, Susie grudgingly obeyed. Almost before the words were out of her mouth Isabel had vanished.

On the way down to Nassau Street in the taxicab, much of Isabel's ardor cooled. She began to think of the unpleasant consequences should her information in any way have been false; of the absurdity of entangling herself in affairs that did not concern her. But again and again the memory of Cecil's

supposed injustice returned to give her new strength, new rage, new decision.

Nevertheless, it was a frightened and extremely nervous young woman who went into the small first-floor office under the sign "Direct Wire" which had once attracted Veronica French.

Inside there was pandemonium. Around the ticker a group of greasy men in shirt sleeves stood chewing the butts of their cigars, and growling. Others, behind them, were busy reading newspapers in English, German and Yiddish. A crumpled-looking youth stood in front of a huge blackboard chalking up figures and announcing their intent in his own jocose manner. The windows were all tightly closed, and the place reeked of stale tobacco and sweat, so that a wave of sheer nausea kept Isabel swaying, for an instant, in the doorway.

Several men turned and grinned at her. One of them, a hippopotamus with three days' growth of beard and no collar, said: "Vell, keed, vot do ya vant, huh?"

"I want to see Mr. Isaac Burnham," said Isabel, in an almost inaudible voice. "Is he here?"

"Vait, and I'll see." The man went past her to a door labeled private, poked in his head and shouted: "Hey, Ike, here's a laity to see you."

Isabel heard the reply: "What the hell for?"

"I should know so much," said the large man, and withdrew his head, to inquire of Isabel, with an ambiguous wink, "Vot's your business—he vants you should tell me. Poisonal, huh?"

With a last spurt of courage Isabel pushed him aside; found herself in a small, close office, with the father of her friend.

The light was dim. For an instant the man with his feet on the desk stared, then, all of a piece, he got up.

"You!" he cried, and Isabel thought he sounded frightened. "Whassamatter? Anything wrong with Suey?"

"No." Isabel began to feel calmer. "No. I came to see you . . . on busi-

ness. I once said that if I ever had a chance to do you a good turn I would. If you'll ask me to sit down. . . ."

Isaac, recovering from his amazement, pulled a chair out of the gloom, and turned on the green shaded light over his desk. Isabel thought the smile on his lips was indulgent, as though he desired to humor a child, or somebody slightly insane.

"Now," he said kindly, "what did you want to tell me. Spit it out, youngster. Don't be afraid."

"I'm not afraid," and Isabel, her pride stung by the calm patronage of the man so thoroughly at home in his robbers' den of an office, added haughtily, "It is you who have something to fear, Mr. Burnham. I have come to tell you that I discovered . . . quite accidentally, that within the week you and your partner will be arrested on a charge of bucketing."

It must be said for Isaac Burnham that his expression did not alter one whit. He had been trained in the school of gambling, and at this moment, with his heart quaking inside him, his training stood him in good stead.

"Young 'un," he observed, removing what was left of a cigar from which he had bitten the end, "you must be nuts. I don't know where you got what you seem to believe is good dope, but take it from me, it's the bunk."

"It's gospel truth," Isabel contradicted, with a dreadfully convincing calm. "You can do as you please. I've paid off my debt. I've given you fair warning. Take it or leave it." And she got up to go.

Isaac, jumping up, seized her arms.

"Say, you," he squealed, "don't you go spreading any such lying rumors. I'll have you jailed for libel, that's what I'll do. I say it's all a damn lie, a damn dirty lie, do you hear? And I ought to know, ain't it?"

With a shudder of repulsion Isabel freed herself.

"You may count on my discretion," she said coldly, "and I hope, equally, that I may count on yours. Good morning, Mr. Burnham," and with her nose

in the air, and a flaming color on her cheeks, Isabel went out of the stinking office into the sweet air of winter.

Presently Isaac pounded a bell on his desk, simultaneously yelling: "Hey, Willie . . . Willie Rabinowitz . . . come on, you loafer, get a move on. . . ." And when his double summons was answered: "You, Willie, you do what I say now. Shake a leg. You get up to my wife's place up there on Park Avenue . . . drive my car up, you see, and you bring the Missus and my girl down here. Don't come back without 'em, d'ya hear?"

"What'll I do if they're out?" inquired Willie Rabinowitz meekly.

"You find 'em, see?" Isaac looked at his watch. "They won't be out," he remarked. "It ain't hardly noon yet. You'll probably find the pair of 'em still in bed."

"What'll I do then, boss?"

"Bring 'em along—for Godsake whasamatter, can't you hear?" And Isaac put his hands to his head in a gesture of despair. "Get out, Willie, go along, you'll find 'em."

EVIDENTLY Willie did. For after a time the outer door opened and Olive Burnham, in a black tailored suit, with a scarf of silver fox about her throat, came in, followed by a still sleepy daughter.

"Sit down," said the head of the family. "I got a serious matter to talk about to you."

"I fahncied as much," said Olive, stifling a yawn with a carefully white-gloved hand. "Do proceed. And perhaps you will be good enough to open the window. The air in this office is obnoxious."

"It'll be worse in a minute," growled Isaac, but he did as his wife requested.

"I thought something must be wrong," Susie volunteered, "when Isabel came rushing up to the apartment in such a funny way."

"Oh, she dropped in on you, too, did she? Well, did she shoot the beans?"

Mrs. Burnham sighed audibly, as though overwhelmed by the vulgarity

of her husband. "What beans?" she inquired at last.

"These here." And Isaac told them exactly what had taken place between himself and Isabel.

Pause.

The hippopotamus looked in and said a man wanted to see the boss.

"He should live that long," snarled Isaac, slammed the door, and turned the key in the lock.

Olive spoke.

"Is it true that you are a crook?"

Isaac scrutinized her for a while. "I guess you can stand it," he said philosophically. "It is true."

"I am not astonished. And just what does it mean?"

"It means," Isaac ground out, smashing his hand down on the desk, "that at best I'll lose every nickel, and that at worst I'll lose every nickel and go to the jug, too. See?"

"And pray," inquired Olive, with admirable self-control, "what is to become of your wife and daughter if you pay the penalty for your crimes?"

"There's still a chance. It ain't much, and it ain't sure. But it's a chance worth gambling on. My assets, which ought to be somewhere around two hundred and twenty thousand bucks, is about seventy-five grand. If I can raise enough money to fill in—if I can do it quick—there's a chance to give those legal fellows the slip. Just a chance, mind you. The market, curse it, is soaring every minute, and if we're called on to deliver certain stocks—well—we're caught short."

"Pretty," said Olive. "Very pretty indeed." She drew her scarf more closely about her, as if in defense against the cold wind of poverty which already was fanning her cheeks. "And what is this chance of which you speak? This slender chance?"

"Well, as I said, it ain't sure. It's up to you and the kid . . ." he made a ghastly effort to be jocose. "You got a good many of them assets on you, right now. And it's a case, like they say, of all hanging separately if we don't all hang together."

"Well . . . what is it that you wish us to do?"

"You got jewels worth two hundred and fifty thousand between the two of you. That means that in a pinch . . . say, between now and tomorrow morning when the market opens, I could probably raise about a hundred and thirty. Mebbe less. So that's it. Now—how about it? Going to come across?"

For all the movement she made Olive might have been Lot's wife after she had turned to look at Sodom and Gomorrah. But Susie, little red-haired Susie, flung herself across the room, stripping off rings and jeweled bracelets as she went, and crying: "Yes, Daddy. Oh, yes. How could you even ask? Of course everything's yours, Daddy, and the business will be saved, won't it? And everything will be wonderful, won't it, Daddy, darling?"

"I hope to God it will," cried poor Isaac, in a voice shaken with gratitude and amazement. "But I ain't going to make false promises. The more you two hand over, the better chance we got. But it ain't sure, so you better think about it good!"

Susie quietly unclasped the pearls from about her neck. Glowing like lovely living things they fell into her cupped, extended hands.

Then it was that Olive, the immobile, came back to life. "Stop it, you little fool!" she screamed. "You don't know what you're doing. Slender chance, indeed! And if it fails, are we expected to starve in the streets?" Pushing Susie behind her, she faced her husband, a fury unchained. "And you—you dirty scoundrel," she gasped, "wanting to take away your baby's jewels for your own selfish ends."

"It was to save the business," Isaac shouted at her. "To save us all, you mad woman."

"To save your own neck, you mean. To—to—to—to take with you when you beat it for a foreign country." She veered about. "Susannah, put on your rings . . . and let us leave

the lair of this viper who calls himself a man. . . ."

Left alone, Isaac Burnham sat with his head bowed, and his hands limply at his side. After a time Willie Rabinowitz came and touched his shoulder, saying gently, "Say, boss, you ain't had any luncheon. Can't I get you a sandwich?"

As if this unexpected touch of kindness was too much for him to bear, Isaac put his head upon the desk, and sobbed.



Chapter Twenty-Six

THURSDAY.

Richard Du Maurier, twirling a new malacca walking stick, which he had purchased on his way down to Pearl Street, entered the ancient offices of an ancient publishing house.

The iron stairs clanked beneath his feet like the chains of a mediæval ghost. But inside all was order and precision. The great open spaces of the first floor were separated into segments by acres of wood palings. Typewriters clicked, and quiet, preoccupied-looking women went here and there, intent upon their business. The girl behind a maple desk near the entrance greeted Du Maurier by name . . . but not by the name of Du Maurier.

"Who do you wish to see, Mr. Madden?" she asked politely.

He told her, and after a time found himself comfortably seated in one of the fenced enclosures. A little man in a braided morning coat, who looked like an unusually intelligent crow, greeted him cordially.

"Well, Dick," he said, "have you anything for us?"

"Nothing today," laughed Du Maurier. "But I came to tell you that I've almost finished the new novel . . . a corker, if I say so myself."

"Humph!" observed the Crow, retiring behind a huge table. "I believe it. Your writing is about the only one of your talents that is never overestimated."

"*Gracias*. Like the property man in *The Yellow Jacket*, I bow."

"Tell me about the opus."

"It's based on fact, for one thing, and you might be sued for libel in case of publication, if it were not for the fact that the young woman upon whose emotions I have drawn for much valuable material does not belong to the suing class. I have called it 'The Eternal Huntress,' and lifted the quotation about eternal huntress and eternal woman being one and the same thing from 'The Younger Generation,' for use on the title page. By the way, how goes 'The Younger Generation'?"

"As well as could be expected, and better. Of course, you'll never make a fortune out of your books; they are altogether too good. That is, you won't unless you write a disreputable romance, and in that case, unfortunately, we could not afford to publish it. When will you be ready to show us the new book?"

"It's at the typist's now. I'll have it back tonight; tomorrow I'll edit it; and on Monday morning I will offer it for your perusal."

"Excellent, my boy. We always need good stuff. And although I think you receive altogether too many compliments as it is, I must tell you that I agree with the critic who called you one of the few men in America who write English."

Both men arose and shook hands, and Du Maurier departed, in a good humor with the world at large and with himself. At a nearby flower stand he purchased one of the red carnations which he still wore, then, whistling softly, went downstairs into the subway.

There were not many people riding uptown at that time of the morning, and he was able to unfold his paper, and go through it at his ease. On the second page a heading caught his eye—one of those glaring scandals of which the papers were full these days. The headline read: "Broker accused of bucketing absconds with firm's assets." It went on to explain that the police were hunting for one Isaac Burnham, who

had been missing, along with assets to the tune of about sixty thousand dollars, since the previous afternoon. Beneath, in small letters, it said: "Wife and daughter of absconding broker left with nothing but debts."

Du Maurier, shaken out of his indifference into a pity that numbed him with its violence, left the train at Grand Central, and made his way up Park Avenue.

Like some poignant disturbing spirit, the image of Susie was before him wherever he looked. Her shoulders moved to a rhythm of passing motors, and faded; her red lips pouted, parted in laughter over white teeth, and faded. Her small feet, delicate and exquisite, danced before him up the ice-lined pavement where the snow of last night lay soiled. Danced and were gone. Was this love, Du Maurier wondered, this agonizing pity that tore at his heart like a beast, with naked claws and teeth? If this was love, it was not love that he had felt for Isabel æons ago. Before the three unequally arched doors of Saint Bartholomew's, he stopped and prayed, "Oh, God! Oh, Mother Mary! Give me strength to do what is right . . . just this once. . . ."

Subsequently he crossed the street, and went into the great stone canyon where Susie lived.

In the Burnham apartment confusion reigned. The cook had left after insulting everybody roundly, and having her face slapped by Olive, who had then retired to bed with a sick headache. Du Maurier, with difficulty convincing a much excited Barbara that he was not a reporter, was given access to the drawing-room. There Susie sat alone.

She was not crying when he saw her, but came to him as might a queen, dry-eyed, with hands outstretched.

"You know?" she asked. It was a quite unnecessary question, since she was all too well aware that such destructive knowledge was everywhere attained with ease. He nodded. She, bravely attempting a smile, said: "You are the first to come to me. . . . And I . . . I did you an injustice, Dick

Du Maurier. I thought you'd be the first to turn away from poor penniless Susie."

"We all attempt to stand by our friends when they are in trouble," he said with some embarrassment. "I may be the first, but believe me, others will follow. You have had too little confidence in our loyalty."

He took her hands, again beringed, and pressed them to his lips.

"Confidence!" she mocked. "Confidence and loyalty! Oh, my God! How is one to have faith when one's own father—one's dearly beloved father . . ." Her pause was eloquent. The first tears hung quivering upon her lashes. "I shan't bore you with such sordid stuff," she concluded, resolutely winking back the tears.

Du Maurier bent down, as he had to do in order to reach Susie, and kissed them away. "I want you to tell me," he urged, in that tone of gentle command out of which certain female novelists have made considerable fortunes. "That is, if you feel like talking."

"Feel . . . I don't think I feel at all. I'm numb with misery."

They sat down.

Du Maurier, preserving sense—or cowardice—enough to wish to hear some sort of story before making a formal proposal of marriage, listened to the endless list of grievances, and marked the pointed lines of worry, anger, and disgust drawn as if overnight upon that child-like, doll-like face.

"He asked us for our jewels, for everything we had," said Susie. "And I—I wanted to give them to him. I'd always loved my daddy so, even though he was what you'd call a rough diamond. But mother—" She launched into an explanation of Olive's cautious retreat, now in her mind, proved unquestionably just and right. "Think of it! If that isn't enough to shake anybody's faith in human nature, what is? The person I'd always loved, my own father, and all he wanted was to steal my every thing . . . and run away . . ." She covered her face with her hands—judiciously—hiding the line of muscled

hardness her lips could not restrain.

"Fortunately," Du Maurier pointed out, stroking her shoulder, "you have a valuable asset in the jewels. They must be worth a great deal. . . ."

"A couple of hundred thousand at best," interrupted Susie, looking at him between her fingers. "What can one do with that? Moreover, we have no guarantee that someone won't attach them . . . when our bills come in . . . for debts and things. . . . A paltry quarter of a million don't go far. . . ."

"Don't go far . . ." Mechanically Du Maurier repeated the grammatical error, while he meditated upon his own meagre resources. They would seem less than nothing to Susie . . . a few months' rent, at most. Of course there were always the profitable openings brought to his attention by the parents of his friends. But Richard Du Maurier's mind, still watching over Richard Du Maurier's emotions, surmised shrewdly that opportunities thrust upon Richard Du Maurier as an eligible bachelor, might not even with effort be attained by Susie Burnham's husband. So much he clearly saw, but had no time for further musings, since Susie, cut to the quick by his preoccupation, had burst into tears and called for most immediate attention.

There came to Du Maurier with amazing conviction the knowledge that dams were more easily opened to release torrents than closed to confine them. In a lucid access of panic, he realized that Susie was on the verge of hysterics. With that swift action attributed to the very great, he gathered her into his arms, compunction almost overwhelming him. Once more that violent, hateful pity tore at his breast, where he cradled Susie like an infant, rocking, soothing, endearing.

Anon she raised a wet and agonized face to be mopped off with a pocket-handkerchief. Her tantrum had left her spent, exhausted, so weak it was an effort to make an incoherent whisper. Grubbing about like a pig among acorns, Du Maurier succeeded in locating a bottle of whiskey. Withdrawing from the

odor, which he abhorred, he poured out a stout drink, and almost fed it to Susie. Presently a little color came into her pale cheeks and she asked weakly for another. After that she felt a little better, and after a third, although Du Maurier begged her to be quiet, she resumed the talk about her own frightful misfortunes, Olive's marvelous foresightedness, which had saved them from complete ruin, and Isaac's villainy.

Her conversational effort tired her considerably; more drinks were found necessary to sustain her in her sorrow. For a while she became cheered, optimistic, affectionate, almost buoyant. Then, just as Du Maurier began to congratulate himself upon his ability as a nurse, and Susie upon her sportsmanship, she relapsed into tears again, interspersed with loud wails, and many reiterated expressions of sympathy for poor, poor Susie.

For some time the aching pity had ceased clutching at Du Maurier's heart. And now, with his customary detachment beginning to reassert itself, he was being forced toward a disagreeable admission. Susie was rapidly getting drunk. In fact, a less charitable person might have said that Susie already was very drunk indeed. Certainly, far from alleviating her present unfortunate mood, the continued application of internal stimulants was rapidly making her maudlin. Her sobs, Du Maurier realized with a shudder, were interspersed with hiccoughs.

It will never be known with what relief Du Maurier greeted the sound of the doorbell, and the subsequent arrival of Wadsworth Silverstein, armed with American Beauty roses in a receptacle from which the stems protruded almost two feet.

Du Maurier rose precipitously; he welcomed Silverstein with something so like effusion that the younger man stared in wide-eyed wonder. "You are just in time, just in the nick of time," exclaimed Du Maurier, "I have a very important engagement, excessively important, I might really say urgent."

And he shook Silverstein's hand so violently as to almost sever it from the wrist. "Perhaps, also," he remarked, after taking a farewell from Susie to which she did not pay the slightest attention, "you will be a more successful comforter than I have been. I have great confidence in your ability as a comforter, great confidence," and, with this final word of encouragement, Du Maurier made his escape.

Outside he stopped and regarded the three unequally arched doorways of Saint Bartholomew's Church. Just here he had stood and prayed God to show him the right . . . and laughing with a miraculous sense of freedom, Du Maurier reflected that God had indeed answered his prayer by preventing him from committing himself irrevocably. Cheered, and thoroughly aware of what a narrow escape he had had, Du Maurier glanced down at the red carnation in his buttonhole; sniffed, removed it; and, with a careless gesture, tossed it into the gutter.



Chapter Twenty-seven

CECIL had gone back to Philadelphia, accompanied this time by the junior partner of Harcourt, Hutchinson and Vincennes; to see whether anything at all could be done about the Burnham business.

Anastasie was taking her customary Friday off, but she had started early, for it was one of those days which come to New York in February, when the snow begins to thaw: a day smelling of spring.

Adrian was sullen. He wanted only to be left alone with his bottle of whiskey and his morbid thoughts. He was disappointed in that there had been no violent scene between his daughters, but only a coldness lacking those perquisites of melodrama which would have rendered it amusing to the Captain. He told Isabel, with a sneer, that she was but small game after all, and invited her to get to hell out of his bedroom.

So Isabel stood alone in the empty studio, looking out of the north window upon light mist and sweetly tempered sunshine. The morning paper, predicting that a blizzard en route from Chicago would strike New York before noon, had evidently made one of its current errors. The flat disc of the sun glowed with a pleasant warmth, and the air that blew in through the open window was as warm as the air of May.

Yet Isabel sighed. She was profoundly discouraged. With work, with love, with life, with everything.

A sharp rapping aroused her from her reverie. She called "come in" casually enough, but already some omen of psychic discord had identified her early visitor. Though she evinced little surprise when Du Maurier entered, she was seized with a sort of claustrophobia; she felt that she was about to suffocate. The walls and ceiling of the room folded inward, upon her. "Good morning," she said in an ordinary voice—and this, too, had passed.

Du Maurier stood out against a black gap of unlit hallway, immaculate as always, a gardenia stuck in his buttonhole.

With a feeling of anguished and tormented joy, Isabel knew that her lover was returned.

"Good morning," he answered, closing the door behind him, and beginning to strip off his grey suede gloves. "All by yourself?"

"Yes. Cecil has gone to Philadelphia to see what can be done about this wretched Burnham affair. I've sent my model home because she got neuritis from posing in a draught." Isabel was aghast at her ability to lie without reason, but heard herself continue, "My father is cross, and doesn't want me near him, and I'm overjoyed to have you interrupt the important business of wondering whether it will snow."

Thus the lovers' reunion. . . .

"Won't snow," promised Du Maurier optimistically, "because I have just got my roadster from the shop, and I am taking it out for exercise."

Isabel had come away from the window, by this, and flopped down on the

very edge of the divan. Du Maurier approached and stood above her, looking down. Isabel, too, looked down, elated, confused, feeling her whole body thick and bloated with this unforeseen joy. Du Maurier could see nothing but the top of her head, shining like an ebony billiard ball.

"Where are you going?" she asked finally, her voice sounding befurred.

"Didn't you know I was landed gentry? I have a country estate. It has three bedrooms; a living-room; two storerooms, one for fishing rods and one for old letters; a bath; and a kitchen. In the middle of a marsh on the South Shore of Long Island, and as marshes are inclined to be damp, it probably needs a coat of paint. I'm going out to see, because I intend to occupy it this summer."

Isabel looked up after an interminable wait. "Is it very far?"

"Good three and a half hours' ride. It's nine country miles from the nearest village, which consists of two chicken coops, an imitation roadhouse, and a gasoline station. It's"—Du Maurier examined his watch—"just ten-fourteen. Coming along?"

Isabel hesitated for an instant, thinking of Adrian left alone. But, after all, he would not let her stay with him if she were there. And besides, she remembered only too well the old adage about opportunity knocking but once. She could not afford to deny an answer. "You just watch me," she cried, and skipped toward the bedroom, her parted lips revealing an unexpected dimple in either cheek.

"What an ass I have been," thought Richard Du Maurier, as he sat staring at the door through which her slim form had vanished. "What an unmitigated ass . . ."

On the other side of the thin wall, Isabel was tearing off her clothes with frenzied haste, her heart pounding all the time, "*Wack-a-wack-wack, Dick has come back.*" to the time of a kettle-drum, and, or so it seemed to Isabel, just as noisily. Her agile hands did not rest until they had stripped every bit of

clothing from her body, until she saw her naked white reflection in the long mirror. She gave herself a single triumphant glance, before attacking the bureau ferociously, she turned the contents of three drawers upside down on the floor.

Ten minutes later she was freshly clothed from her white silk chemise to the little fur toque that was pulled far down over her ears, and framed an intensely living face in the pelts of little dead squirrels.

When she went in to say goodbye to Adrian he looked at her with cynical amusement. "You wear the sacrificial robes, I see," he said. "Where is the altar?"

Briefly she explained Du Maurier's proposed excursion to the country. "Good!" cried Adrian, "if you can only manage to get stuck there overnight, you'll have your way before morning." And with this suggestion, he cried farewell to Isabel.

As for Du Maurier, he limited his remarks to the suggestion that she change her sheer grey silk stockings and high-heeled patent leather slippers to something more practical for rural use. Whereupon Isabel, convinced that her appearance delighted him, remarked that she would freeze before she would change.

"You'll probably freeze before you have a chance to," Du Maurier prophesied as he helped her into a long squirrel wrap. "But I am forced to confess that there is something deliciously naughty about little silk ankles under a big cape. My friend, who is waiting in the car, will undoubtedly admire you enormously."

Isabel's heart sank with a thud, but outside, when she saw the friend, she burst out laughing.

"This is Achilles," announced Du Maurier, uncovering a shaggy, grunting heap which immediately resolved itself into a miniature hurricane, all tongue and bark. "And this, Oh Achilles, is Isabel."

They climbed into the car, and Du Maurier put the dog on Isabel's lap.

She stroked his head and scratched behind his ears, until, moaning with soporific joy, he abandoned himself to the embrace of Morpheus.

Du Maurier threw in the clutch, the roadster snorted responsively, and they were off, started upon the greatest adventure Isabel was ever to know.

"*Wack-a-wack-wack, Dick has come back,*" sang the throb of the motor as it pounded across the Queensboro Bridge and sped down the Merrick Road. "*Wack-a-wack-wack, Dick has come back,*" echoed Isabel's heart.

Her joy was so poignant that it brought tears to her eyes, and she turned and stared out over Long Island, holding closely to the warm bundle of loyal dog flesh that lay against her breast. "*Wack-a-wack-wack. . . .*"

"This seems like old times," said Du Maurier tentatively.

A little, dumb nod. The car sped on, ever on. "*Wack-a-wack-wack. . . .*"

"We'll stop somewhere and have a bite of lunch. Another hour and we turn into the Marsh."

Two hours . . . they had been driving for more than two hours.

It seemed to Isabel that this had always been. The still country, white, and brown, and grey, under a sky all white, and grey, and silver, purified her heart, her soul, her very body. The past with its long bitterness seemed wiped away, gone forever. She and Du Maurier, and the little white dog were alone in a cold world, and they were beautifully warm . . . *Wack-a-wack, Dick has come . . .*

"Here we are! Jump out. Legs stiff?"

"Sort of."

Achilles woke up and ran yelping about their feet, happy and unmanageable. They had stopped before a sad, disheveled looking roadhouse, with a green roof which needed repairing, and whitewashed stairs which someone with large boots had recently muddled.

"Have to take the key," Du Maurier remarked as they uncramped themselves. "Couldn't afford to be stranded here without a car, could we?"

Isabel, reminded of Adrian's parting words, replied practically, "Is the key so important? Can't you start a car anyway . . . ?"

"Not this one," Du Maurier informed her with fatherly pride.

They left Achilles in the car and ascended the groaning steps. A man in blue overalls brought them luncheon—lamb stew and steaming coffee. To Isabel it was nectar and ambrosia.

Then something happened. As they went out on the porch a handsome bare-headed girl ran up the path. "Hello, Dick," she cried—and stopped, flushing to the roots of her corn-flax hair.

Du Maurier greeted her amiably enough—he called her Charity. And he and Isabel went their way. But Isabel's peace was spoiled. Abruptly she had realized that her palace of happiness was built upon sand. Joy had crossed the border line and become pain.

Now the thing she had weathered in the last months appeared to her in all its terrible nakedness. She knew she could never weather it again. She knew that she must hold her man; that at all costs she must bind him with some irrevocable bond. "If you can only manage to get stuck there overnight . . . you'll have your way before morning." That was what Adrian had said. . . .

As he opened the door of the car Du Maurier saw the look in Isabel's eyes, and before it he was suddenly silent.

The clouds had thinned to an even grey pall, hanging close to the bare-branched trees. The silver disc of the sun gleamed faintly unnatural, then vanished, to be seen no more. Sky and earth mirrored each other with a relentless neutrality.

"I don't know that we should go on," pronounced Du Maurier with a distrustful glance at the heavens. "Looks like snow, and the marshes are impossible when it's snowing."

Isabel's heart leaped.

"Oh, go on, go on," she cried impatiently. "Now, that we've come this far it would be a shame to turn back."

"Very well, dearest," agreed Du Maurier. "On it is."

THEY PASSED a few straggling farm houses, all of them wearing the same forlorn habiliments as the road-house which they had left behind them. It seemed as though the marshes, creeping beyond their allotted confines, had infringed upon the homes of these quiet country people, and set their stamp of living death upon all the neighborhood.

It was a desolate scene, yet, following terror, a strange feckless exaltation had laid hold of Isabel. It was an emotional exaltation, something keenly related to sex, to her newly found maturity. Subtle thoughts and sensations, novel, exhilarating, drove through her mind, bringing a half smile to her lips, a smile not unlike the enigmatic one on the lips of Mona Lisa. The desolation of the country was like a tonic to Isabel.

About a mile beyond the last farm house the road swung off, inland. A thick growth of trees screened the marsh and the sea at this point, and a rutted by-way, extending to the southeast, was the only thread of guidance into an enchanted world of salt marsh.

Here, then, at the by-way, they turned. Turned toward the noncommittal grey sea, which lay stretched out beyond, the broad flat areas, blotted out, here and there by clusters of tangled woodland. The road wound in, out, between these clusters, over shaky board bridges, through ice-filled crevices, threading the body of the marsh, all veined, as it was, with silver strands of the sea.

Du Maurier had a man's job keeping the car from toppling headlong into a ditch. It bumped, it lurched, it skidded. It roused Achilles, who looked with mournful concern over the edge of Isabel's sleeve.

Du Maurier twisted the steering wheel vigorously back and forth, staring straight ahead. "It's too late to turn her back," he explained. "I'm afraid of snow. In case it storms we'll be able to wiggle out this way, barring accidents, but we couldn't walk a quarter of a mile without losing ourselves, strolling into quicksands, or wallowing

in the bog. There are stories. . . ." At this point he was interrupted by a mighty bump, which explained his missing the significant expression on Isabel's face. ". . . Charming spot, isn't it? Lovely place to show a girl a good time."

"It's wonderful!" breathed Isabel, with honest rapture in her voice. "It's as though the secrets of the sea were made tangible. It makes me feel as though I were a . . . a . . . a disembodied spirit, if you know what I mean?"

"I know that if this bridge is as shaky as it looks you'll *be* a disembodied spirit," was Du Maurier's unromantic response.

Even as he spoke they crossed the bridge in question, and, swinging to the left, passed a clump of gnarled oak trees, their trunks woven together with underbrush, and trellised with vines, which, in summer, formed an arras of foliage. The turn revealed, at a distance of several hundred feet, the object of their journey: a small slate-roofed brick cottage, surrounded with bushes of hawthorne and hydrangea and rhododendron. It was for all the world like an invention of Aladdin's genii, set, as it was, snug against wind and water, in a world where wind and water had ruled supreme. Beyond the confines of its small garden, and a crescent-shaped beach with mooring for a canoe, the marsh stretched away, unbroken by tree or trunk, to be lost in the acrid embrace of the Atlantic.

"Oh!" gasped Isabel. "It's like a dream come true. It is a dream come true."

"Yes," said Du Maurier, "the dream of a rather sober ancestor who did not mind mosquitoes." He added, in a tone which betrayed his appreciation of her compliment. "Wait till you see the inside. Then judge. We'll have to jump out here. As you can see, there is no more road."

He parked the car in the shelter of a great, twisted oak with spatulate branches, and hurried ahead to unlock the door and bid his guest welcome. Isabel watched him, as, followed by

Achilles, he walked up the narrow flagged path to the cottage, tall, and straight, and proud. As she watched him she knew that it was her man who went there, her own man, the only mate she would ever know.

As she got out of the car she took the key to the motor, and, looking at the house to make sure she was unobserved, dropped it into her purse. When she rejoined Du Maurier at the cottage, he saw that the queer look was in her eyes again.

And, for the second time, he was silent.



Chapter Twenty-eight

FROM the outside Du Maurier's house might easily have been taken for one of those platitudinous Colonial cottages which crowd the suburbs of New York. The disparity was evident in an absence of sharp white lines between discolored bricks, and in the lineal purity of the white doorway surmounted by a carved pineapple. There was a knocker of brass, and a crystal door knob marked with deep incisions, the pattern much sought by collectors of early American accessories.

Except for a bathroom and blue and white tiled kitchen, wherein Du Maurier had sacrificed tradition to convenience, the interior might have been done by some Puritan ancestor, in that period which followed upon bare need, but preceded the over ornamentation of the Victorian era. Deep polished mahogany, richly colored damask and figured chintz stood out from cream tinted walls, combining old England and new England in a manner altogether charming.

From the oblong entrance hall, Isabel had followed Du Maurier into a square room which shared with the kitchen the ground floor of the house, and offered, through a three-fold bay-window, a view of marsh and sea. Here well filled open bookcases lined the walls. In one corner stood a grand-

father's clock, silent now; and in another a cabinet filled with old china.

Above the fireplace, in a position which must have caught the full light of morning, hung the portrait of a woman, rich in color, for all that in spots the paint was crisscrossed by thousands of diminutive cracks. Her face and bare shoulders were admirable, and showed above the costume of the period of Napoleon Bonaparte, Du Maurier's pale skin and dark hair. The actual resemblance ended there; and yet the vaguest similarity of expression was fixed with all its fleeting and elusive quality upon the canvas.

"Who is that?" Isabel asked.

"Her name was Marie Louise du Lac.

"Related to Launcelot?"

"No, little devil, only to me," and with this fillip to a starving curiosity, he changed the subject. "Now, for a fire. The house is like an icebox. There is kindling here." He pointed to a rush basket, filled with logs and bundles of twigs, tied together with marsh grass. "You might run into the pantry and see if you can find some tea. Later we'll make the rounds and see what needs fixing."

In the kitchen Isabel found an assortment of provisions, but almost immediately her preparations were interrupted by Du Maurier.

"Damn it," he shouted, "it's beginning to snow." He dropped his bundle of kindling wood in the middle of the rug, and commanded, "Put that kettle down anywhere and get your coat. We haven't a minute to lose."

Isabel's heart beat a little faster, but without a word she slipped into her coat, and whistled for Achilles, who had wandered into the upper regions of the cottage, and characteristically settled himself to sleep. By the time she had located him, and failing at persuasion, carried his squirming body down the stairs, it was snowing in earnest.

She met Du Maurier coming up the flagged walk. "Let's have the key to the car," he called.

"The key to the car?" she opened her eyes very wide. "Why, Dick . . . I thought you took it."

Du Maurier glanced at her sharply. "Better make sure you haven't it. The old bug won't start without. . . ."

"It can't just disappear," Isabel unnecessarily averred, making pretense of searching in her bag. "Did you look in all your pockets . . . and . . . and in the seat? It must be *somewhere*."

"So it must."

A little chill of fright prickled her spine.

"We . . . that is . . . we had better look again," she said, hoping her nervousness would be attributed to fear of being marooned.

"Yes, we had better look again," echoed Du Maurier.

They did. In vain, of course. Meanwhile, the snow thickened, driven in flurries by the wind. Isabel could scarcely see Du Maurier through the dense cloud of dry flakes that scurried between them. Achilles had gone, tail pendant, back toward the cottage.

"It looks as though we'll have to follow his example," said Du Maurier.

"Isn't there a wire or something—that you can adjust?"

"No—I thought I told you—I had a special lock made, after my last car was stolen. The damned thing won't move an inch unless we push it."

His sally was received by a weak laugh. Isabel rubbed the snow off her face and supposed, faintly, they would have to walk.

"We can't walk Isabel. It's the key or nothing." Again she felt his eyes upon her, searching.

"But, Dick. . . ." Business of clutching his arm, located with difficulty in the blinding dance of snow. "We'll have to walk. You must understand . . . why . . . we'll simply have to. . . ."

"We'll have to stay right here, until the storm stops. It's suicide to try to walk . . ." and he checked a move on her part with a peremptory grip.

"Is there a telephone?" she asked,

finally. "I suppose we can get some charitable soul to come and salvage us."

"Telephone's disconnected."

"There's nothing else to do?" she asked, trying to keep the tremor from her voice. "We'll have to stay . . .?"

"Yes," said Du Maurier. "We'll have to stay."

Hand in hand they moved up the flagged path, Isabel feeling like a desperado, yet suddenly afraid.

"No lights either," he remarked, as the door closed finally behind them, "except candles, of course. That's a fetish of mine, you know. Candle-light."

"Well," Isabel observed philosophically, "I had better return to my tea." She added: "It's some consolation to know that I'll have time to make biscuits. And there is jam on the shelf."

"I think you will find canned vegetables, too," said Du Maurier, looking down at her. "I'm sorry this happened, Isabel."

"I'm sorry, too," she lied, bowing her head.

He lifted her face with a hand under her chin. "Say it's not my fault, Isabel, and that you aren't . . . angry at me."

Almost inaudibly: "I know it's not your fault," she whispered. "And . . . I'm not angry . . . of course."

OUTSIDE the snow fell softly, like padded footsteps.

The grandfather's clock, wound anew, ticked away hour after hour. The light waned; the fire threw warm lights upon a ground of tenuous shadow.

At seven o'clock they sat down to an impromptu supper. Between them there passed no single word of the exigency that enforced their domestic bliss. Like husband and wife they bandied trivialities in the candle-light. They were affectionate and gay, but underneath the surface of their banter a certain tense expectancy ran like a liquid flame.

After supper Isabel cleared off the table, poured water heated on the stove into the sink, and applied herself to the business of dish washing. When Du

Maurier offered to help her she turned on him indignantly.

"Get out of my kitchen, you great clumsy brute," she commanded, waving a saucer at him, and Du Maurier, outwardly meek and inwardly relieved, followed the suggestion of her finger pointed at the living-room.

Anon she joined him. She stood behind the couch looking down at Du Maurier as he watched the leaping fire. Then, without disturbing the peace with conversation, she walked to the bookshelves and began to look about.

"I knew this place reminded me of something," she cried after a time. "Listen to this, Dick." Triumphant she brandished a volume of Sydney Lanier's poems. "Listen. . . ."

*'But now when the noon is no more, and riot
is rest,
'And the sun is await at the ponderous gate
of the west. . . .'*

Rapidly she flicked over the pages—

*' . . . I would I could know what swimmeth
below, when the tide comes in
'On the length and the breadth of the mar-
vellous marshes of Glyn.'*

"Do you really wish you could know?" Du Maurier asked after a pause. "You read it as though you did."

The clock ticked loudly and often before Isabel turned her face to Du Maurier and showed a singularly sweet expression, disturbing, and new. "I really don't care, just now," she murmured. "I'm too happy to care, Dick. I . . . I love this place. . . ."

Du Maurier caught an upward inflection at the end of the sentence.

"But you wouldn't like to live in it," he supplemented.

Isabel considered her reply, trying to fathom Du Maurier's thoughts, since the wavering fire-light made his face unreadable. "But I *would* like to live in it," she confessed finally.

"What, out here . . . with the mystery of the marches lying close, like a wall around you, and beyond that wall the mystery of the sea? You don't know, Isabel . . . it might frighten you."

"No, no. It seems almost part of me."

It is not an alarming mystery, Dick, but a beautiful one. It does not come from outside, but is in the very veins and blood of the flat marshland."

Bewildered by a certain exaltation, the cause of which eluded him, Du Maurier asked what she meant.

"I mean . . ." Isabel hesitated, tangling fingers in her hair, as she did when confronted by a problem, "I mean it's not an ulterior mystery, Dick, like a murder or a robbery. It's a deep, vital thing, awesome and mysterious because it hints at things bigger than we are, like the broad starry sky on a summer night, or the peak of a mountain at sunset." She wanted to say: "Like you."

"I think," Du Maurier remarked, "that the mystery is in your own mind, my dear. The marshes in fact are but a nasty collection of mud and grass and sand and sea—to say nothing of mosquitoes."

She looked at him, almost at the point of tears. "Oh Dick, you are a beast. You like to take mystery away from things."

And as if to hide her emotion, she went back to the book-shelves, and replaced Mr. Lanier. "You have some fascinating books," she said at last. "What is this shelf? . . . all sorts of books on magic, and folklore, and . . . why, some of them are in Latin, Dick. Are you so horribly erudite?"

He walked over, balancing a cigarette between his fingers. "The prize of all of them," he observed, tapping the white calf back of a certain book, "is in plain English. It's rare, and very precious. I bought it at the breaking up of Lord Meruthrie's library, in London. I was up there on a furlough in nineteen sixteen. Lord Meruthrie was a great antiquary, with a bug for the collection of old superstitions, and this book, because it makes no claim to being scientific, because it is merely a collection of intelligent observations by a man who patiently scoured every corner of the world for material—this book was a real find."

"What was his name, when did he live, and die, and so forth?"

"Who, the author? His name was Andronomy, Luther Andronomy. He died penniless and outcast about twenty years ago. His book, the work of a lifetime, was banned by our holy Catholic church—"

"Our? Surely, Du Maurier, you are not—"

"I am. I adhere to the most pagan and picturesque of modern religions." And Du Maurier, who was, as Isabel had hinted, in a mood to strip the mystery from things, went on: "Some of my family were 'South of Ireland'; others French Jesuits; I have a brother who is a priest. He would have excommunicated me long ago if he could have—but, after all, it would be awkward for a priest to have an excommunicated brother."

"I don't think I shall ever understand you, Dick," sighed Isabel. "Unless—not even if—I learn all about your antecedents. Which, of course, I never will."

"Why don't you try asking, little owl? Don't you remember, 'Seek and ye shall find'?"

Isabel stared, questioning his sincerity. She perceived that he was quite in earnest.

"Tell me," she pointed to the painting over the fireplace, "about your ancestress, Madam,—or was it Mademoiselle—du Lac."

"Madame." Du Maurier replied. "Before she married her name was Du Maurier. She is the ancestress through whom Andrea Dartie and I claim our relationship. There were two sisters. One of them espoused the court surgeon of Napoleon Bonaparte, and this was Andrea's great-great-grandmother. The younger one, Marie Louise, married the Marquise Du Lac, a gentleman of unfortunately libertine habits. My great-grandmother left him, and, to escape his righteous rage, came to America, bringing her baby girl along. The girl, Marie Josephine, married an Irish-American called Madden, from New York. Meanwhile her mother, unable to be divorced, consoled herself in another manner. She was the family

disgrace, and her own child repudiated her."

And Du Maurier tossed his cigarette into the fireplace, and presently, looking off toward the windows, where the snow still fell, "My mother, a Lenox, from Lenox, Mass.—she took my father's faith along with his name, by the way,—didn't want Marie Louise hanging about with respectable generals and such, so I took her down here. They never called on her," he added, "and now, of course, they never will."

Isabel, who had been aroused by the mention of the names collectively inscribed upon the book her Aunt Veronica had lent her, controlled herself sufficiently to ask: "Are . . . your parents dead?"

"To all intents and purposes," said Du Maurier. "Mind if I smoke a pipe?" Isabel made a negative gesture, and when he had filled the shining brown bowl with tobacco, Du Maurier resumed: "My oldest brother holds the chair of Political Economy in a New England college. He married a girl from Lenox, where my mother's family did and do live. When my mother died, my father and my second brother, the priest, went back to Dublin because they felt that America was getting too progressive for them."

He puffed upon the pipe for several minutes, uninterrupted. "Just before my mother gave up harping upon the wicked ways of the world, and took to harping on a golden lyre," he continued, in his old ironic tone, "she expressed the opinion that I was possessed of a devil. She must have been right. I am the only romantic member of an otherwise normal family." Du Maurier halted, and then, as one who throws discretion to the winds. "As you suggested long ago, my dear," he said, "my mystery is not an actual one. Like certain noble creatures who live at the bottom of the sea. I have builded me a home upon my back, and I carry it wherever I go."

"Like Mary and her little lamb," suggested Isabel.

Du Maurier realized, as men at

crucial moments rarely do, that he was about to commit himself irrevocably.

"My name," he said, "is not Du Maurier, but—"

"Lenox Madden!" Isabel cried out. Amused at the expression of his face, "Oh Dick, my Dick," she chuckled, "I should have known. When I read 'The Younger Generation,' I kept on thinking how many of your lines you'd stolen from it . . . and I never guessed." She took his hands and looked into his face. "Why was it such a secret, Dick?"

"Because—the answer is involved with—" he paused, seeking the right word, "a complex, really. You see I like to be mysterious. Besides, I wanted to write—to write real people."

Isabel broke in, "I knew when I read that book that the heroine was Cynthia, but she would choke you if she knew you wrote it, wouldn't she?"

He shrugged. "Very few people knew my secret when I came back from the war. Andrea Dartie, and Veronica French, and Andrea's husband, of course. Then there were the ones like Cyril Harcourt and my publishers, who knew Madden but not Du Maurier. They were the only ones that caused me worry. You've no idea how easy it is to be a mystery—if you want to—in New York. I had a very pleasant life doing just the opposite of the accepted thing; that is, writing under my real name, and living under a nom de plume."

Isabel looked up. "You might have told me, Dick," she whispered.

"I almost did—once. That night when you wore rubies. . . ."

Abruptly, as though afraid of the distance he had traveled unawares, Du Maurier swung back to the bookcase. "We've forgotten Luther Andronomy," he said. "You'll want to see him."

For some reason—quite aside from the simple one that her interest had been diverted into a more personal channel—Isabel did not want to see the book. But to please Du Maurier she bent over the heavy volume which was inscribed: "Dream Symbols and their Relation to

Sex and Folk Lore. An Unscientific Study."

"You see," Du Maurier showed proudly, "The man was a lion for method. Everything is alphabetically classified and indexed. People about whom superstitions have arisen, like Moses, Jesus Christ, and Joan of Arc; then places, Stonehenge—a hundred others: then, last and most important, symbols—the cross, the mirror, the circle, the sacrificial lamb, the cat, the—"

"Do let me have it for a moment." And Isabel, interested in spite of herself, reached for the book. Du Maurier let her take it to the fire and watched her as she turned the pages.

On page 465, under the letter L, Isabel found the following passage:

"The superstitions, so prevalent in Europe during the Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Century, having to do with the appearance in dreams of a White Leopard, supposedly originated in a native tribe of South Africa. This tribe of semi-savage cave dwellers had a peculiar religion of its own, and consecrated its altars to the worship of woman-as-mother, in sharp contradistinction to the worship of woman-as-virgin.

The White Leopard, originally symbolizing the instinct for motherhood (it later degenerated into a worship of carnal pleasure, celebrated by innumerable orgiastic rites), owed its importance to the intimation of racial increase, and thus appealed to the desire for conquest. It was customary to sacrifice the fathers of brides upon the altar, in the belief that the father's soul would pass into his daughter's body, thus causing her to give birth to a son. Nevertheless, in the course of several centuries, the White Leopard, originally an omen of fecundity and progress, became through constant bloody sacrifice upon its altars, the symbol of a dreadful fatality, in which the identity of the male was swallowed by the lust of the female. . . .

The superstition was not, however, confined to Southern Africa. Blakenridge attests that in Egypt the goddess Isis was supposed to appear in the form of a white leopard, but he can offer only scanty proof. Thus also Schlinger claims that the White Leopard was the favorite animal of Diana the huntress, but this has been completely discredited owing to a lack of proof, and to the obvious discrepancy between the symbolism of the Leopard and the symbolism of the Virgin Goddess. . . . It was a common belief during the so-called Dark Ages, that vampires frequently assumed this form. . . . Our only pleasant summaries come from a tribe discovered in the vicinity of the Amazon basin

which continues rigidly to justify the utmost selfishness in its females on the grounds that through their religion they will some day become masters of the earth. . . ."

The room was silent as a tomb.

Isabel let the book slip from her hands and heard the beating of her heart. The memory of Rousillon flashed through her mind like a nightmare, followed by the thought of Adrian . . . alone.

"What is it, Isabel?" Du Maurier was at her side, holding her shuddering body in his arms.

"I'm frightened, Dick, terribly frightened. That book—" she bit her underlip, but finally burst out: "I shouldn't have left father all alone. If anything should happen—"

"But you couldn't help this, could you?" She made no answer to the question, only shivered, and: "Don't be a child," he said. "Forget about it."

They sat together listening to the clock, the crackling flames, the whistling of the wind. But the spell of peace was broken.

"I think I'll go upstairs," said Isabel, at length. Her tone was weary and discouraged. "A little sleep—"

"Would do you good," Du Maurier concluded for her. "After all there is no law commanding us to 'keep vigil till the dawn cometh.'"

In that space when time hung fire between them both knew that they were there alone. Two souls together in the midst of desolation.

Thus sharply: "Take that along." Du Maurier, unwilling to come closer to the girl, pointed his pipe toward the candlestick. "Better take the first room on the right. The beds are made, at any rate. I always leave them that way."

"Thanks." She took the candlestick and moved away. But at the door she turned. "Don't think that I did not appreciate your confidence," she said. "Good night." And without looking at him again, she went up the stairs, the candlestick falling full upon her throat and face, so pale against the darkness of her hair. . . .

Du Maurier, flinging the rare and

precious volume from him, sat moodily upon the couch.

"Achilles," said Du Maurier, "Women are damnable, damnable!"

The dog did not wake up.

"You are indeed a lucky scoundrel,"

Du Maurier went on, "who can run out at random, pick a mate, and then forget her. How different are the problems of a man . . ."

Watching the fire intently, Du Maurier set about reconstructing the day's events as he had seen them, starting at the point when, going to a window to call Isabel, he had seen her slip the key to the car into her bag. He had not, then, credited her with nerve to follow the undertaking through. But when the snow had come, and with it her chance to retrace her footsteps, she had stuck like a soldier to her guns. Flattering enough, Du Maurier reflected. She loved him, he sensed, as men are loved but once. Not only his vanity, but his sensual organization as well, responded to the intensive compliment. And yet—and yet—to be trapped into matrimony—ugh!

Queer it was, how the ideas of marriage, outside his code six months before, had wormed itself into the scheme of things. In running away from Isabel he had run into Susie, and—irony of mental evolution—Susie it was who had prepared his mind for the idea of marriage. Slowly, insidiously, as water wearing away rock, women's advances, women's expectations, had conquered independent thought. "Eternal Huntress." The phrase which he had coined came to his mind. A hunt was what it was. For some years he had played his game, played like a seasoned sportsman, only to be at last—trapped into matrimony.

A furious resentment welled within him. At least the facts were to be clearly faced. She wanted to be compromised—but—coward like all 'nice girls'—she ran no chance of facing results more tangible than gossip. She would take the fruit, yet would not pay the price. Her precious dower of virginity might well be used for bait—but

bait judiciously withdrawn once the steel trap closed down upon the victim. Bait for the eye, but not the teeth. . . .

Eh well, it was a game that two could play at, allowing the man to be, like Lenox Madden, unhampered by that sentimental doting chivalry, best known as conscience. When morning came, and with it Isabel, still chaste in all but future reputation, romance should find a fitting end.

THUS thinking rather proudly of his strength, Du Maurier grew conscious of a sound, and looking up saw Isabel beside him. The gray fur coat drawn close about her stopped at the knees; above the high-heeled patent leather shoes her legs were bare. So, in his dreams, he might have found her.

"Dick," she said, and stood, clutching her coat. "I was afraid, alone, Dick. And so—and so I came to you."

She dropped beside him: the grey fur brushed against his cheek.

Slowly he kissed her. Then, holding her by the shoulders, looked steadfastly into her eyes, wide and dilated now, wet with the tremulous and eager fright of passion-swept virginity. . . .

The fire was burned to embers. Only a fitful, local glow about the hearth saved the still room from total darkness.

Isabel, opening her eyes, looked about, knowing she had not moved since that first kiss, yet sensing some change in all about her. The darkness gathered. A sense of sleepy thickness weighed upon her eyes. She wondered where she was.

A hand was clasped in hers.

"Rousillon?" she whispered.

And then, with an abrupt sense of her own stupidity, knew that it was Du Maurier whose hand she held.

Now the darkness had grown well nigh impenetrable, and still holding that hand, Isabel felt herself moving through it, as the figures in dreams sometimes move. And presently her eyes grew familiar with the darkness and she saw that they, she and the one whose hand she held, were standing before a high barred gate, all overgrown with moss

and creepers. And Isabel remembered that she had been there once before, and had been terribly afraid. But this time she was not afraid. She touched the gate and it swung open, and they passed through, she and the one whose hand she held, into the land beyond.

Then Isabel remembered that once, very long ago, a small voice had said that at the top of the hill there was a passage, and at the end of this passage a certain well . . . a certain well . . .

Now it grew lighter. The pathway, which ran first upward, then steeply down, was soft beneath their feet, and softness and a soft strange light was all about them. And music, too, was somewhere.

And at length they came to the spot from which all the music, and the softness, and the light, had come as mist comes from the sea. Down many steps they went, and came at last upon a pool that shone like crystal. And on the brink they stood, she and the one whose hand she held, naked as Adam and Eve before they tasted of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. . . .

Step by step, slowly at first, they went into the pool. The silver water splashed about their ankles, and their feet grew lighter than the feet of Mercury. Then to their thighs the water rose, and higher, till it touched their breasts, and it was as if their breasts were rose buds, that now bloomed. Everywhere came a sweet tingling, a purification, and the music of the fountain was sweeter than ever was mortal music, and the clasp of their hands became a union of unending beauty. . . .

Upon a stillness as of slumber, the voice of Du Maurier broke in. "My dear, my dear," whispered Du Maurier, "surely we have found that fountain of youth for which Ponce de Leon sought in vain. . . ."

Then Isabel knew that their dreams had been one, and there was a song of gladness in her heart.

And in this hour of Isabel's triumph, Du Maurier put his head against her breast, and whispered gravely: "I love you, Isabel. I want you for my wife.

I want you always. . . ."

Outside the snow fell softly, like padded footsteps.



Chapter Twenty-nine

THE BREVITY of Cecil's trip was only exceeded by its fruitlessness. A dozen others, having gone to Philadelphia for a purpose similar to hers, had stood about exchanging grievances in the lobby of the Bellevue-Stratford, and outside the District Attorney's office. Late in the afternoon had come a rumor that Isaac Burnham had returned; would pay his debts in full. One newspaper hinted that the good angel was a suitor of Isaac's daughter, and Cecil suspected shrewdly that the mantle fitted Silverstein. But as there was no further news forthcoming, and as Colin Vincennes was remaining for the week-end, she took an evening train back to New York.

It was nearly midnight when she got in, but knowing that Cyril Harcourt was in the habit of reading before an open fire, she took a cab directly to his house. There would be great relief in pouring out her troubles in her employer's sympathetic ear, and she longed for the balm of his patient philosophy. But when she arrived, a yawning butler said that Mr. Harcourt had left at tea time in Mrs. French's car; nor could he tell what time his master would return.

With the sting of jealousy exaggerating her depression, Cecil went home. The studio was dark, and she collided with malicious corners as she hunted for the lamp. In the empty bed-room the covers were not turned down; that meant that Anastasic had not returned. Cecil—who had secretly counted on a cup of steaming coffee, but was too tired to get it for herself—reflected irritably on the faults of mankind in general, and of Isabel in particular. What business had the silly kid in going out . . . in leaving Adrian alone?

Not stopping even to bathe her face

—which felt dry and sooty after two hours on the train—Cecil crossed the studio and tapped gently at her father's door. There was no answer, and she pushed it cautiously open. A reading lamp shed a green glow over tumbled covers and cushions. The bed was empty.

Cecil slipped into the room, only to stop, pressing her fingers against her throat.

Adrian lay face downward on the floor.

It seemed that she stood for an hour clinging to the bed post, staring at the twisted body of her father. Then she shook herself like a dog, and walking steadily across the floor, dropped to her knees. As she did so she heard a faint sound. He was alive then. . . . Adrian lying so still, so very still, was yet alive. . . .

Cecil struggled to turn the body over; found it a dead weight on her hands. When at last she succeeded, she saw that there were four long scratches upon his throat: ragged, still wet with blood.

At first it seemed that not a muscle stirred. The one eye stared up upward, so that a faint line of white showed beneath the iris. But immediately the faint sound that Cecil had heard before was repeated; one corner of the mouth began to twitch spasmodically; the left eyelid began to twitch spasmodically. Cecil was convinced that her father had recognized her.

Failing in her attempt to get Adrian on the bed Cecil stood undecided. Finally she took the telephone and managed to give the number of the Teutonic specialist who had been so soundly cursed by Adrian a few weeks before. He was out on an emergency call, and with a blank, empty feeling, Cecil left her address and a message that he was to come as soon as possible. She recalled that there was a doctor on the floor above, and although she had never liked that sour red-haired man, who was eternally fidgeting with the heavy gold deaths-head which balanced his fat gold watch, she found herself thumping insistently upon his door, shouting "Don't

stop to dress. My father. . . . I think he's had a stroke!"

Her opinion was grudgingly confirmed by the red-headed Dr. Carroway, who hated to agree with an amateur diagnosis; and later by Dr. Schlegel; and by Dr. McDonald, a white-haired gentleman with an international reputation. Cecil succeeded in forcing the truth from harsh, competent Dr. Schlegel: Adrian had lost the use of those of his limbs which had not previously been crippled, and owing to the condition of his heart it seemed unlikely that he would live to see another sunrise.

At three o'clock a nurse arrived. Cecil was bundled off to her own room with a summary command to "get some sleep" which brought a smile to her lips. If only Isabel would come! Cecil had a persistent picture of her sister dancing at Montmartre or the Rendezvous, laughing and talking, careless—she had always been careless—of the drama that was unfolding itself at home. There was no hope of sleep. Instead, she bathed, redressed her hair, put on fresh clothes, and sat down on the couch in the studio, listening to the low voices behind Adrian's door. It seemed a long time that she sat there, straining to catch the sound of footsteps—perhaps of laughter—in the corridor outside, for when, starting wide awake, she glanced at her watch, it was after six. She knew at once that Isabel had not returned, but crowding out that fear came another—that Adrian had died while she was sleeping.

By some miracle he had not. Dr. Carroway explained that her father was in rather better shape than before. He could even talk—not very distinctly or coherently, but if his heart had not been in bad shape from ten years' constant drinking he might have lived on for another decade. As it was. . . .

"A matter of hours," Cecil echoed stupidly. Then, "May I see him?"

"Later, perhaps." And Dr. Carroway, who had some time during the proceedings, found time to dress, swung his sinister and suggestive fob in a shining arc.

"Has he asked for me?"

"No." Once he had called the name of Isabel. For the rest his mumblings had all been rather mad. Something about a wild beast—a tiger, or a leopard. Dr. Schlegel had been kind enough to throw some light upon the subject.

It appeared that during an attack of delirium tremens—or was it two attacks—he had suffered from the same delusion. He must have been drinking a good deal . . . shouldn't have been left alone . . . had practically torn his throat to shreds with his own hand.

"His own hand?" Again Cecil heard her voice as an echo. "The marks looked so . . . so catlike."

"Nonsense!" And cross because Cecil's remark had seconded an uncomfortable observation of his own, the doctor concluded, tactfully: "A very interesting case. Captain Rayburn has promised us his body for post-mortem examination."

Once more Cecil was alone. The grey light had started to shimmer outside the window; it was going to be a fine day.

The first thing Cecil did was to telephone to Veronica French and Cyril Harcourt, to find out whether either of them had heard from or of Isabel. From the first she could elicit no reply. Mr. Harcourt's butler informed her rather crossly that a telegram from his master had announced that he would not be home before Monday.

At eight o'clock there was a knock at the door. A boy handed her a telegram—from Isabel, she was sure. With hands that trembled as they had not done when she touched Adrian's paralyzed body, Cecil tore it open. She read:

"Were married this afternoon wire blessing Ritz Atlantic City Veronica and Cyril."

Chapter Thirty

ISABEL and Du Maurier arrived in New York with barely time enough to get their license before the department closed for the day.

As if overnight Du Maurier had fallen in love. Fallen in love with that intensity of which only the complete egotist seems capable. Even in defeat—and defeat, after all, it was—he was aggressive. Experimentalist at heart he had thrown himself with mind and body into this adventure and was enjoying with every power of exceptionally alert senses the age-old experience of possession, and the newer experience of being possessed.

Isabel's first sensation when she awoke that morning had been one of bewildered amazement. Tradition and training had taught her to expect something very different of life: a changed outlook, a sense of victorious maturity, or one of shame. It had seemed odd that the world could be so lovely, so serene, above all, that her own body having known the ultimate moment of ecstasy, should seem no less virginal, no less her own.

Later—"I'll make a bad husband," Du Maurier told her passionately. "I am selfish and cruel. I've never been honest even with myself. I'll make you terribly unhappy."

To which Isabel replied: "I'd rather be unhappy with you than happy with anyone else."

"Will you mind being married by a priest?"

"No—but why, Dick? Do you really care? I never knew you had any religion."

"I have—I always have had. I've been a bad Catholic, but I've been a Catholic all the time. I was educated by a priest, you see, a Jesuit. He was the only spot of color in a neutral childhood. Although he could not liberate my body from the cage of bigotry in which my family kept it, he directed my imagination toward that beauty to which no man ever quite attains." Du Maurier broke off, afraid of making himself ridiculous, and concluded practically: "He's in New York—an old man, now, but still my father confessor. I'd like him to marry us."

"And so would I."

"Then you won't mind bringing the

children up as Catholics? You'll have to promise that, you know."

Isabel shivered in his arms. "Oh, Dick, I love you so," she said gravely. "I won't mind anything."

"You'll mind me," laughed Du Maurier, "when we're married."

The corners of Isabel's mouth drooped.

"We must call papa as soon as we get in. I feel so guilty about leaving him," she explained. "You see, you must confess to your holy father, and I to my very unholy one."

"He'll raise hell, I suppose. But he can't do more than insist that we marry at once. And that will suit our book."

"Oh, he won't be angry," Isabel imagined. "But he will be frightfully embarrassing. He'll talk about the 'red magic of love,' and, Oh Dick," Isabel interrupted herself, "I hate to be silly, but every time I think of what I read in that horrid book a chill runs down my spine."

"Then don't think about it. We'll soon be in town; we'll telephone to the studio, get our license, and be married this afternoon."

But when they arrived, there was no time to telephone. They had forgotten that Saturday was a half-holiday, and that the Marriage License Bureau closed at noon.

Of the big room in the Municipal Building Isabel received but a vague impression. Long rows of tables with aisles between them; a confused babel of inarticulate foreigners asking questions of other inarticulate foreigners. Then she and Du Maurier had handed their slips into the cage and had received the license.

Outside in the crystalline air: "Darling," whispered Du Maurier, "Can you believe that in a few hours we'll be married?"

And indeed Isabel had wished for this moment such a long time, that now it was here she could hardly believe in it.

As they drove uptown, past piles of snow already melting, Isabel looked at the buildings climbing toward the

turquoise sky, and thought, "They're real, and so am I. And Dick is really going to be my husband."

When she voiced the thought, she recognized it as a fact; as a result of her own actions. At once she was frightened, and leaning away, she looked at Du Maurier's profile, clear cut as if carved from ivory. It was familiar to her: it was the profile of the man she loved; yet somehow it was strange and foreign too, cold as a statue by Praxiteles. Perhaps he sensed the thought. At any rate, he took one hand from the wheel, and without turning, found her arm and drew her against him. A pang, she did not know whether of agony or pleasure, shot through her limbs, leaving them liquid. The sunlight, and the sky, and the tall buildings, seemed to swim about her. . . . When finally they stopped, and Du Maurier helped her out of the car, only the scratch and furry smell of his thick coat next to her face recalled her to herself. She laughed uneasily and went into the house.

THE janitress looked embarrassed when they put Achilles in her charge; the corridor was dull and cheerless; the foyer outside the studio was so black that Isabel could not find her key. In the darkness Du Maurier pulled her to him and covered her face and throat with kisses. She clung to him as if for protection against some outer force. She felt that they must stand together against a hostile world. She was afraid that somehow he would fail her.

"Oh, Isabel, Isabel," he whispered, over and over. And the quickness of his breath made the words into sobs.

Then the door was wrenched open from within, and Cecil stood upon the threshold.

Hand in hand, like a pair of truant school-children, Du Maurier and Isabel faced her, and felt foolish. Isabel broke the spell.

"Don't give us such a dirty look," she said, with an attempted flippancy. "We have the license with us," and then, before Cecil could reply, she saw

the white-robed nurse come from her father's room, and knew why Cecil's face was like a mask of tragedy.

Never before had Isabel been face to face with death. Her mother had never been more than a fleeting memory. Later, during her years in boarding school, the "flu" had come; had carried off one of her closest friends, yet death had not seemed present. Simply one brave autumnal day they wandered side by side, kicking away the russet leaves; just such another day, a coffin had been lowered to the grave . . . and after that there had been no more walks. Came the war, and death, softened by distance, and upraised by glory, had had its crimson holiday, yet not come close to Isabel. And now, as if in answer to her premonitions, death had come. What was it Adrian had said so long ago? "A father for a lover." And now, the leopard, omen of misfortune, had its prey.

Schlegel and Carroway had gone, leaving the suaver person of McDonald to take charge. He took Isabel kindly by the hand. "Your father wants to see you. We think this wish is what has kept him going. You must be prepared to see him suffering and greatly changed. Be glad that it will soon be over."

Dumbly, and walking like a figure made of wood, Isabel followed the doctor into Captain Rayburn's room.

The shades were drawn, and to Isabel the body in the bed was no more than a heap of covers. She attempted desperately to realize that this thing was her father . . . her father. She tried to visualize him young, strong; tried to see him striding through a jungle; to see him holding a woman in his arms. She could see nothing but bedclothes, bedclothes curiously humped and gnarled, like a fallen tree trunk wrapped in a sheet.

"Is—a—bel!" said her father's voice. "W—welcome."

She dropped beside him, bending close, feeling unwilling tears pursue their course upon her cheek. "Oh, papa, papa! What can I say? It's all my fault."

"S—say—it again."

When she had repeated her words distinctly. "B-bloody nonsense," Adrian mumbled. "Can't sm-mile for obvious r-reasons, but would if I c-c-could. We b-both get what we want. Y-you a man; I, a g-g-grave." There was a pause. "Don't c-c-cry, d-d-damned little fool," he commanded. "The g-g-game's up. Be a s-s-sport. Give the l-l-l-leopard its due. Are you m-m-married legally, or o-o-only t-technically?"

"I'm not married, papa. We got the license first, but oh, papa, don't be so kind and forgiving when I've as much as killed you.

"I'm not k-kind. I'm m-malicious. N-n-nature's played hell with me. N-n-now, it's your turn. She'll do worse with you. She always d-d-does with women. But there's n-n-nothing more she can do t-t-t-to m-me. I've b-b-beat her at last. There's just one th-th-thing I want. G-g-get married here b-before I go. I want to d-d-die l-l-laughing."

Isabel tried to speak; found herself sobbing.

"Sh-shut up, will you, don't waste t-t-time. Get D-d-d- What's-his-name. G-g-get a—" here Adrian was interrupted by a horrible sound, as of coughing.

Isabel waited while Adrian's motionless body was wracked by such pain as Prometheus torn at by vultures may dimly have perceived.

"W-what is his n-n-n-name?" Adrian finally resumed. "D-d-du M-m-maurier?"

"Not really, papa," whispered Isabel. "It's Madden. He writes. He's been living under the other name to keep away from his family's friends or something. It's a long story."

"Well, d-d-don't t-t-t-tell it. Send him to g-g-get a m-m-minister. I'll see you m-m-married by God, before—" Here another spasm of coughing interrupted him.

The nurse started over, but Dr. McDonald laid his hand on her arm. "Let him alone," he said, "it's only a matter

of hours,—minutes perhaps. It's wonderful he's held out this long. His will —" and he made a gesture which the nurse understood.

Isabel explained: "He's a Catholic, papa. He wants to be married by a priest."

"A priest? B-b-better and better. Let him f-fetch his priest. P-p-p-perform c-c-ceremony by b-b-bedside of d-d-dying—even a p-p-priest will come for that. L-l-lord, the humor! of hearing a wh-white-robed priest speak of the g-g-goodness of God when—ah—"

Isabel, so conscious of his suffering that her own body ached, appealed in a whisper to Dr. McDonald: "Must it hurt so? Can't you give him something?"

"I am afraid not," and the doctor explained about Adrian's heart. "He seems to be bent on seeing you married. He'll probably live until then. You see, the law forbids us to hasten a man's death, however merciful that might be."

Laws, Isabel thought, how strange and cruel, and inadequate they were. It had seemed to her that in doing what she had done, she had obeyed the only law. But now she could no longer distinguish right from wrong, and her mind moved on against her will through odd scenes, and toward uncalled-for memories. She remembered the day when her father had first spoken of the white leopard . . . of the laws of an African tribe. "A father for a lover," he had said. "Excellent plan." And he had told her of the red magic of love. Last night . . . Was it only last night . . . ? She had seen the workings of such magic, and now, looking upon the outcome, she thought of her forebodings and of how her lover's lips had stilled them.

Once more, as long ago, she sensed the workings of that vast machine called Nature. The horror of her father's plight had set its seal upon her, which she felt burning, changeless as the mark of Cain. And yet an inner voice whispered persistently that time would teach

her to forget. She would bear children and forget. The law would carry on its bloody business of new lives for old, regardless of the heartbreak and the waste. Nature concerned herself with greater destinies than those of Isabel or Adrian.

Cast up once more out of the vice of pain, her father urged: "Now that you've s-s-seen this p-proof of Javeh's g-g-goodnes, send for the m-m-minister of his gospel, and let him tie the f-f-fatal knot."

The doctor nodded quickly. And Isabel, wondering that her shaking legs could bear her, reached the door.

"Bless you, my d-d-daughter," Adrian called after her. "You'll s-send me out like a b-b-bubble, in a b-b-burst of glory."



Chapter Thirty-one

DU MAURIER found Father Corcoran in a meek little church on West Forty-fifth Street. The priest was a frail old gentleman, but tall, and still erect. The mop of fleecy hair that curled about his well-formed head was white. Once his dark eyes had sparkled with the joy of living, of worldly knowledge. But since then they had looked long upon the sorrows of mankind, and now they were washed clear of all save compassion and a half wistful, half humorous understanding. Immediately upon seeing Du Maurier he supposed that his former pupil had been up to some sort of mischief, for of late years the boy had only come to him on such occasions.

"Well, Dick," he said, in a perfectly modulated voice. "What have you done this time?"

"I am about to be married," said Du Maurier. "And I'd like you to perform the ceremony, Father." And suddenly, he went down on his knees before the priest, and, as he had not done since childhood, told the truth.

Afterward, "It's all very irregular," said Father Corcoran sadly. "And you

have done a grave wrong. Moreover, it is an incontrovertible fact that a wrong once done cannot be wiped out until the day of judgment. But Jesus preached the doctrine of forgiveness, wherefore his earthly ministers should do no less. Yes," he concluded, rubbing a frail white hand over his curly hair, "yes, you must be married at once. And since Miss Rayburn is eager to embrace your faith, and since her father is upon his deathbed, I think a dispensation can be procured to proceed without the publication of the banns, and to perform the ceremony at Miss Rayburn's home."

So it was that at a little after three on that sunny afternoon Du Maurier and Father Corcoran came to the studio.

Dr. McDonald received them. The white-haired man of science and the white-haired man of God shook hands.

"I cannot save his body, Father," said the former gently. "Perhaps you can do better for his soul."

The priest—who in the past hour had heard much of Captain Rayburn—compressed his lips. "My business here," he said, "is to perform a marriage. The soul of Captain Rayburn is in the hands of his Maker."

"Not yet," the doctor muttered. "But, for his own sake, I hope it will be soon." And he turned to lead the way.

Then Cecil, who all along had stood in utter lassitude, intervened. "I hope his Heavenly Father will treat him better than his child," she cried out bitterly. And, facing the priest, she demanded: "How can you marry such a pair? They are no better than adulterer and murderess."

"My dear," said Father Corcoran, regarding her with grave and worried eyes, "you are hysterical. Doctor McDonald, this young lady needs your care." And, passing Cecil by, he went into her father's room.

"Papa," said Isabel, "the priest has come."

"G-g-good. T-tell him to d-d-do his stuff." Then to the priest, "If I

c-c-curse while you're performing," he enquired, "w-w-will you refuse to c-c-c-continue?"

Father Corcoran smiled sweetly. "I will not hear you, Captain Rayburn," he replied. "It is my private opinion that if you waste breath on interruptions you will not have enough to last through the ceremony, in which case you will not hurt the Church at all, but only cheat yourself out of wholly undeserved—and therefore doubly desirable—amusement."

"G-g-god!" groaned Adrian. "I should have kn-n-nown that s-s-something would go wrong. I hoped to g-g-get a bigot and now my future s-s-son-in-law has brought me—c-c-correct me if I'm wrong—a J-j-jesuit."

"I see you do not flatter us with the contempt which we no doubt deserve—from such as you."

"V-very g-g-good. And n-n-now, go on. The d-d-day is almost over."

The room was very still. There was no light except the rays of sun that filtered through the shades and lay across the leopard skins upon the floor. Clear as a bell the priest's voice rang out.

"Richard, wilt thou take Isabel, here present, for thy lawful wife?"

"I will," Du Maurier said, evenly.

"H-h-he has to. He c-c-can't escape."

Then the priest asked the woman: "Isabel, wilt thou take Richard, here present, for thy lawful husband?"

"S-s-superfluous qu-question. Actions speak louder than w-w-words."

"I will," whispered Isabel.

Then she and Du Maurier joined their right hands, and after the priest Du Maurier repeated: "I, Richard Lenox Madden, take thee, Isabel Rayburn, for my lawful wife, to have and to hold—"

"And p-p-probably deceive."

"—from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part."

Then Isabel, also after the priest, said: "I, Isabel Rayburn, take thee, Richard Lenox Madden, for my lawful

husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part."

"She'll b-b-be an angel," Adrian observed. "She's as p-p-patient as her mother, whom, p-p-praise God, I'll n-n-never m-meet again."

"By the authority committed to me," said the priest, "I pronounce you united in the bonds of matrimony."

Du Maurier then placed the gold ring, which he had bought on his way to the studio, upon the third finger of Isabel's left hand, and echoed: "With this ring I thee wed, and I plight unto thee my troth."

Then, as the ceremony of mixed marriages does not permit the blessing to be given, nor the prayers, the priest spoke briefly to Isabel and her husband, bidding them lead clean and useful lives, to bear children, and to know the will of God.

Meanwhile, within the confines of his inert body, Adrian strangled with heroic laughter.

When he could speak again he called on Isabel to bring the casket which contained the ruby bracelets. "F-for the bride," he muttered, in a scarcely audible voice. "Sh-sh-she's earned them." Then he asked that the shades be lifted, and when it had been done, "L-l-look," he said, "the s-s-sun is setting. Another d-d-day is done. So life sh-sh-shines for a moment, and th-th-then goes back to blessed d-dark-ness."

Isabel and Du Maurier stood by the bed, and presently were joined by Cecil. Arms folded on his breast, the priest waited behind them.

Now in a stronger voice: "Open the w-w-window," Adrian commanded. "Let the b-b-beast come in. She's w-waited long enough."

Cecil stepped to the window, and as her shadow crossed the bed, a loud cry broke from Adrian's lips.

Instinctively Isabel put her hands over her eyes. And when at last she took them down she saw Father Cor-

coran making the sign of the cross over her father's body.



Chapter Thirty-two

ON A CHILL night in May the Lenox Maddens returned from dinner with Cyril and Veronica. They were tired, and the little apartment—once the home of a bachelor called Du Maurier—seemed a haven of rest. Achilles was there to greet them, to bark, and snap at the fur border of Isabel's long black cape.

She laughed and gave it to her husband. Then, going to the window, she leaned far out between the blowing curtains.

"Darling," he begged, "you have a cold now—you'll get pneumonia—everybody's getting it."

"Please, Dick, don't be such an old maid. Come and look at the stars. There are trillions of them."

"Shan't do anything of the sort. I'll build a fire, that's what I'll do." And he suited the action to the word.

Isabel was looking well these days. Her figure had fulfilled the promise of alluring roundness; her mouth had lost much of its former petulance; her eyes, sadder and softer, since her father's death, as if the tragedy still lurked within them, seemed also to have taken on a deeper hue. Her husband reflected proudly that these things were not illusions of inflamed imagination. Everybody noticed them. Father Corcoran had noticed them. That very night his cousin Andrea had said: "Your little lamb has gotten very pretty. Beware lest she present you with a pair of horns." And once again he had experienced the triumph of possession.

"You lovely thing," he whispered. Bending down, he kissed the white band of flesh that showed between the ruby bracelets. "You lovely, lovely little animal. . . ."

Later, when he was unfastening her evening dress. "I've saved a surprise for you," he said, "we made a thousand

dollars today. The *Post* bought the Stockbridge Potter story."

"How splendid! That's the second in three months. We must phone Stock and tell him. What is his number, dear?"

"I don't remember, but we'll get it from the Chequer Taxi Company." He laughed. "They loved the part about 'heard, but not seen.' Oh, Isabel, will you ever forget the way he told it to us?"

And they conjured up the rainy night when, hunting for a taxi, they had almost collapsed with amazement when Potter had hailed them from the driver's seat of an especially gaudy one. "I always said I'd do it," he told them, "and what a lot of fun it's been. I make enough to buy my booze by sending little bits of gossip to *Town Tattle*. You can't imagine what a lot I've learned about our mutual friends."

"Mercy," said Isabel, hugging her husband. "How our old crowd has scattered. What with Stock driving a taxi, and Cecil in Europe, and your old flame—" she loved to tease him about Susie, "tied to the 'coat kink'."

"Poor fellow," groaned Dick. "I wonder he hasn't been drowned in tears, or asphyxiated by alcohol fumes."

"He seems to be bearing up. I suppose Susie *has* to behave herself after what he did for her father. And, after all, she's a nice kid. I can't very well blame her for wanting you, can I?"

"Oh, hardly," replied Dick, drawing himself up to his full height, and puffing out his chest. "I'm such a devilish handsome fellow."

"And so clever, too. Just think of it, one thousand dollars for a story."

"Oh, well, all that publicity about Lenox Madden, the author, being Richard Du Maurier, the saphead, did me a world of good. I hated it at the time, but it turned out to be just so much free advertising."

He pulled down the black dress and carefully kissed the vertebrae of her spine in alphabetical order. "I'm going to buy a ruby ring for my pretty little wife."

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She frowned. "I'd rather have another stone. . . . Perhaps a pearl," she said. And she slipped the red bracelets over her hand and let them fall jingling on the table. "Anyway," she added, "you'd better wait until you do another novel." And she went into the alcove.

Slowly Dick removed his dinner jacket, and putting on a dressing-gown, sat opposite the fire.

"Wait until you do another novel," she had said. Another novel. He heard it again and again from all directions. Only that morning his friend the Crow had called. "And what's become of the novel you promised us?" he had demanded. "You ought to get it in now. You're on the crest of the wave. Besides, you told me three months ago that it was at the typist's."

Du Maurier had muttered something about changes, although he knew that it lay quite untouched, locked in his desk. Tempting and terrible it was; the book of Isabel. For three months it had been there, left because he could not find the courage either to publish or destroy it. He knew that it was good. He knew, unquestionably, absolutely, that he could not do better. When he thought of it he grew hard and angry with despair. He hated the book and he hated himself. Sometimes he hated Isabel.

But now, when she came in her cream-colored nightgown, with a loose embroidered kimono over it, and curled herself on his lap, his heart seemed to contract and ache like an open wound.

"Oh, Richard Du Maurier Lenox Madden," she said. "I've saved a surprise for you, too."

"What? A pleasant one, I hope."

"Why, and I hope so, too." She clasped her hands behind his head and drew it close to her. "Don't buy me a ring, Dick. You'd better save the money for next year's rent. We'll have to get a bigger place."

"Ye Gods!" he cried. "Imagine you a mother. You little-imp, why didn't you tell me before?"

"I wanted to be sure. I only saw the doctor today, and—and—I wanted to

be sure of something else. Of you, Dick. To be sure that you loved me."

"My dear, I married you, and I'm a Catholic, you know."

"Yes, Dick, but—oh, the way it happened."

"I know, child. That terrible white leopard business. Don't let's go over it again."

"It wasn't only that." She clung to him and smiled enigmatically. "I was a brazen hussy. I was a thief. I stole the key and made—don't say I didn't—I made you compromise me. You were sweet and forgiving."

"I knew about it all the time. I saw you take the key."

"I guessed as much. You never miss anything, do you?" She dropped her arms, and then relaxed against him, rubbing her feet on his trousers. "It was my *pièce de résistance*, but afterward I was afraid—oh, frightfully afraid. One day Andrea said, 'Getting a man is easy; any fool can do it. But holding a man is quite another matter.'

I found both pretty difficult. And always I have feared that I might lose you. . . . That some day I would be to you like Cynthia, just so much material for another novel. But, Dick," whispered Isabel, "you'll never write our story, will you? Never, never, never?"

"Never, never, never," he repeated.

They sat there talking for a while, and presently the talking stopped. And presently he saw that Isabel was sleeping.

Gently he carried her into the alcove, laid her on the bed, and drew the curtains. Then he came back, approached the desk, unlocked the drawer, and taking out the book of Isabel, looked at it tenderly. When he had looked at it, he threw it on the fire, and watched the flames rise high for some brief seconds, making the room suddenly lighter.

"Dick," called Isabel, "come in. I'm lonely."

The End



The Moon If You Like

By Mary Carolyn Davies

The penny called Youth is made to spend!
None can borrow it, none can lend.
You can only hoard it, or spend it free.
Why not come and spend it with me?
I'm going shopping. If you go, too,
We'll spend our pennies while they're new,
And we'll buy the moon, if you like, tonight!
New and shiny and round and bright.



She sounded like "a canary bird talking English sparrow"—the sweetest, daintiest little seventeen-year-old that ever ran away from home to be an actress! Such was Mary Ellen, and Miss Pahlow's story of how she tried so hard to be bad—and just couldn't—is one of the wittiest and most delightful tales imaginable. . . .

The Primrose Path

By Gertrude Pahlow

WHEN Bristow sat down on the bench he hardly noticed the girl at all. He saw, of course, that there was a girl there, but she looked so small and staid and so respectable that she was no more conspicuous than the bench, and he put her down (if he bothered to put her anywhere) as governess to one of the few belated children who still infested the Park. He had plenty to occupy his mind, without thinking of small respectable girls. He had to decide (1) how to sell a lot of drawings to some person or persons who didn't want them, (2) how, if he didn't sell them, to live for an indefinite period on nineteen cents, and (3) whether, if both the drawings and the nineteen cents proved unreliable, to borrow, to steal or to work were preferable. . . .

These problems, though grave, did not appear to him insoluble. He had often been hard up (Mon Dieu, those student days in Paris, when life hung by a breadcrumb!) and always survived. He had a place to sleep—one of those studio apartments with a real studio, a bedroom that even a fat man can turn around in, and a kitchenette visible to any person with good eyesight if he will trouble to squint a little—and his rent was paid for a month. The chief difficulty was his appetite, for a healthy appe-

tite, he had discovered, is a tactlessly constant and undissuadable companion, and Art (or the selling of it) is long, and the time between meals brief.

He had abandoned the general problems for the particular one of whether the nineteen cents would do him more good as dinner that night or as breakfast in the morning, when a gentle impact on his shoulder made him start. Looking down, he saw the neat hat of the small respectable girl reposing on his coat, with her smooth brown head still inside it. He twisted his neck, in alarm, for a better view; but she had not fainted or anything drastic like that; her color was good, her breathing natural: she had simply fallen asleep, and after doing so had appropriated him for a pillow!

AT FIRST he determined that he would quietly but definitely remove himself; without being snobbish, he felt that he was no public parking-place. But the more he looked at her the more this seemed a churlish thing to do. On nearer inspection, this little person was more of a person than he had supposed. Some of her respectability seemed to have evaporated with her consciousness; the neat hat was pushed askew, and the face within it looked childish and charming, with a peculiar appeal in

the shadows beneath the drooped eyelashes and the parted lips. He decided to postpone removing his shoulder for a little while. He had no immediate use for it, and there was no point in being a dog in the manger. . . .

Time passed; and so did people. At first he was embarrassed by their glances, some sympathetic, some amused; but soon he began to feel resentful, then fiercely protective, then pugnacious. Was it anybody's business if he chose to support a poor, tired, respectable little girl who had entrusted her head to him? Her warm light weight against him, her breathing, as regular and-unperturbed as a child's, somehow made him want to fight somebody. He scowled blackly at all the glancers, and only the fact that his arm had gone to sleep prevented him from putting it unequivocally around her. . . .

The final stragglers departed. The long spring twilight faded, and night descended with an air of having come to stay. Bristow began to feel cramped and cold. He thought the girl must have had her nap out by this time, and if she hadn't he felt sure she ought to have the rest of it at home—where, from her looks, it was obvious that she had at least one mother and two maiden aunts worrying about her. So he moved abruptly, withdrew his shoulder, and sat up with a loud cough.

It worked like an alarm-clock. The girl gave a little sleepy murmur, and opened her eyes. Then she looked at her surroundings—the electric light that now shone brightly on the pavement, the deserted Park, the bench. Then she sat up and straightened her hat, resuming with the act her air of impeccable respectability. Her young lips parted for speech, and Bristow (realizing the strain this unconventional situation must be to feelings as decorous as hers) considerately looked away.

"Hell!" said the small respectable girl, succinctly and competently.

Bristow looked back at her, round-eyed. This was not at all what he had expected. "Why?" he asked.

"Because I've waked up too soon. It isn't anywhere near morning, is it?"

"Good heavens, no; it's only about nine. But it's high time for you to go home."

"I'm not going home. I'm going to sleep here."

"Here? In the Park? You can't!"

"Why can't I? People do."

"Not people like you. It's absolutely impossible."

"Where do you get that stuff?" inquired the small respectable girl. "I can sleep in the Park if anybody can. I'm very, very hard-boiled."

She looked so infantile, so decorous, and so completely exemplary as she made this statement that Bristow, shocked though he was, was forced to give way to mirth. "You! hard-boiled! Oh, ha, ha, ha!" he exploded. "Why, you're the newest-laid little thing I ever saw!"

"Yes, there you go," said the girl bitterly. "Just like all the rest of them. Do you know what I am? I'm an actress out of a job. And do you know why I'm out of a job? Because I look so horridly, hideously, damnably respectable. I'm not only out of a job, I never had a job. I've been to every manager in New York, and they all say, 'Run along home, girlie, and play checkers with your little sister.' I want to act deep, dark, unbridled purple passions; and I look like a Methodist Sunday-school teacher!"

In the face of such tragedy as showed on her face, Bristow dared not go on laughing. "That is hard," he admitted.

"Hard? It's simply vitreous. And I can't do anything about it. I get rouge and a lipstick, and everybody says what a nice healthy color I have. I smoke, and even my grandmother remarks that it does look domestic. I run away from home to go on the

stage, and they send me knitted bed-socks and a hot-water bag. And look at this hat! I got it at a shop that's *specially for chorus-girls*; in the window it looked simply devilish; and on me, you'd think it had been designed for Susan B. Anthony."

"All the same," observed Bristow, returning to the original point, "I don't get the idea of this sleeping in the Park."

The girl brightened. "It's the best idea I've had for a long time," she said. "I got it out of the paper. An actress out of a job—just like me—got evicted for not paying her rent—just like me—and she slept on a Park bench, and in the morning there was the *toughest-looking* picture of her in the paper! and it told all about her dark, dark past—that's not just like me, yet, but everybody has to have a beginning. Anyway, I feel sure that when I've done a dissolute thing like this I shan't look so dreadfully blameless. Only I wish I hadn't waked up so soon." She shivered involuntarily as she spoke; the night was sharply chill, and her light coat but a flimsy thing.

Bristow felt profoundly concerned; he was more and more certain that he could not leave a wisp of respectability like this to the all-night mercy of the Park. "You can't do it," he said again, positively.

"I can too!" she asserted. "Don't you *dare* to tell me I'm too respectable!"

"Oh, I don't mean you're too respectable," said Bristow tactfully, "but the Park's too cold. You'd freeze."

She shivered again, uncontrollably. "It is cold as a manager's waiting-room," she admitted. "But I haven't any other place to go. Brooklyn Bridge would be still colder."

"What about going home?"

"There you go again, just like everybody else!" she exclaimed indignantly. "Nothing would induce me to go home. My home is the respectablest place on the earth; it's even

respectabler than I am. I wouldn't go home if home was a fudge sundae—the *last* fudge sundae—and all the rest of the world was sauerkraut. Besides, I've closed its doors on me forever, by my—by my conduct."

He accepted this, though he remembered later that she looked at him with some uncertainty as she promulgated it. "Well, then, what about a hotel?" he suggested. "That would be rather rakish."

"They won't let you in without baggage unless you pay in advance; and my landlady's holding my baggage for my rent, and I haven't any money."

"Neither have I, worse luck. And I can't offer you my home, because it's so respectable that it's no place for you; they won't admit single ladies. We must find a spot where they'll trust us for tonight, and raise the money tomorrow. Oh, I have it! the—" He closed his lips hastily on the laudable initials Y. W. C. A., and amended, "There's a place over here on the West Side where I know they'd take you. Come on; let's try it."

"I don't much like the idea of going to a place where they'll take me," observed the girl. "It's so stodgy."

"Oh, but think how disreputable it is to trudge the streets at night, looking for a lodging, with a man you don't even know the name of!" urged Bristow artfully.

"That's true," she agreed; and with another uncontrollable shiver she rose as he rose, and slipped her small hand within his arm.

II

THE SAME irrational desire to fight somebody that he had felt when she deposited her head on his shoulder surged over Bristow. Fine filaments of trustfulness, of dependence, of childlike femininity reached out from her to him, and he sent forth fibrils of protectiveness, of conscious strength and unconscious tenderness

to meet them. He took her little cold fingers within his own.

"What's your name?" he asked as they walked toward the place where young women Christians associate.

"Mary Ellen Knott. Did you ever *hear* anything so respectable? But I don't call myself that on the stage; I call myself Salome Borgia. That is, I do when I get there. What's yours?—Oh, no, don't tell me; I love to think that I'm holding on to your arm without knowing it."

"You could hold on just the same if you did."

"No, not just the same; it would be much more proper. What are you? I do hope you're not a pillar of society—a bond-broker like my brother-in-law, or a high-minded judge like my father."

"No danger; I'm just a hand-to-mouth artist. Is your father a judge?"

"Yes—Judge Knott. There's a name for you! It's even mentioned in the Bible. Don't tell it to anybody, will you?"

"You'll have to tell it here," he warned her, as they ascended the steps of the Y. W. C. A.

"I shan't," she replied firmly. "It's hard enough to live mine down, without his. I'll tell 'em my Borgia name. Unless," she added with an inspiration, "you think Malatesta sounds worse."

BUT it developed on inquiry that the most abandoned name could do her no good unless it had been filed a week before and accompanied by four references. The rule was infrangible. The capable, spectacled young woman in the office looked with obvious longing at Mary Ellen Knott.

"I'm sorry," she said. "You're exactly the type we want. I'll give you the address of a very respectable house in the neighborhood where they'll take you until we can. They're very particular, but of course your references are good."

"If they're particular," said Mary

Ellen Knott, "it's no house for me. I must go where they'll take me as I am, and no questions asked."

The capable young woman looked so shocked and startled at this that Bristow made great haste to secure the address and bundle his charge outside. "You mustn't be so fussy," he scolded. "The thing is to find you a place to sleep, whether it's particular or not. It's too late and too cold to quibble about details."

"That's not a detail," argued Mary Ellen. "It's a matter of principle. I've suffered from too much particularness all my life, and now I've divorced myself from it."

"Well, you can wait until tomorrow for your final papers," insisted Bristow; and he herded her along to the particular house.

But here also the proprietress, looking at Mary Ellen with an almost cannibal wistfulness, was forced to say her nay, for there was not a corner unfilled. If the applicant would come back day after tomorrow she could almost certainly have a nice room—a room fit for such a nice, quiet young lady. Meantime, there was a respectable house around the corner where she could be accommodated tonight.

At the respectable house around the corner, however, the terms were cash down or no accommodations; no other arrangements discussed, thank you; good-night. It was the same at another house, a little less respectable, down the street. The two fell to trudging from door to door, increasingly weary and cold, decreasingly fastidious.

At last, growing desperate, Bristow accosted a policeman. "Isn't there a place in this doggoned city where a girl who's alone and hasn't any money can spend the night?" he asked.

The policeman looked thoughtful. "Well," he said, "there's the Mary Martha Home, and there's the police station."

Bristow took his charge firmly by

the arm. "Come," he said, "you're going to sleep at the Mary Martha Home or I'll know the reason why. Step lively." And, having only to inquire the address from his informant, he stepped her toward it as lively as possible.

"It sounds dreadfully settled," yawned Mary Ellen Knott as they hurried along, "but I'm so tired now I'd go there if it was the Old Ladies' Home."

"Yes, our troubles are ended now, thank the Lord," said Bristow with heartfelt satisfaction. "You can stay with Mary Martha, and I'll go home to bed."

But alas for their hopes! The severe and shopworn female on guard at the Mary Martha Home looked at the candidate with a scorn that was almost derision.

"You can't get in here," she said with insulting emphasis. "This is only for fallen girls."

"Oh, but I've fallen a long, long way!" urged Mary Ellen.

"Huh! you've got to go some yet," retorted the matron crushingly.

Crestfallen and chagrined, they turned away.

Bristow was as consumed with anxiety about his charge by this time as if he had invented and patented her; and Mary Ellen was plunged in bitterness because once again her fatal exterior had played her false. They walked for some distance in dejected silence.

HOWEVER, nothing could quell permanently the dauntless spirit of Mary Ellen Knott. Presently she lifted her nice, little pointed chin. "When you're hungry," she pronounced, "you never have pep enough to be anything *but* respectable. Now I have five cents—"

"And I have nineteen," contributed Bristow, suddenly realizing that he was ravenous.

"Oh, good! Then we can eat, and I'm sure I'll think of something. 'Out of the fullness of the mouth the heart speaketh'—there, I must *not* quote

the Bible if I ever hope to lose my respectability! Here's a place that looks as if it had something for us."

When they had acquired a plate of hot savory soup and a roll apiece for their united capital, they set forth again; and, true to her prophecy, the girl had taken a new lease on life. Her eyes sparkled, her little demure face flushed; she moved along beside him with a dancing step like a child. For want of any other resource they went back to the Park; but no sooner had they seated themselves to talk it over than she had her inspiration.

"I know!" she cried. "Do you remember what the policeman said was the *other* place to sleep for nothing? The police station. I'm going to get myself arrested!"

She looked so infantile and so incredibly sinless that Bristow did not know whether to laugh or to be exasperated. "Arrested? You?" he said. "You couldn't do it."

"Couldn't I? You just watch me!" returned the intrepid creature. She pulled off the silk scarf that was around her neck, muffled her face with it, yanked the Susan B. Anthony hat viciously over her eyes, and stood in a menacing attitude, crooking her fingers over an imaginary revolver. "I'm the Girl Bandit," she announced, "the scourge of the grocers of Greater New York. I'm going into action now, and don't you interfere!"

Hurrying off to where the junction of their path with a thoroughfare promised possible victims, she hid herself behind a clump of shrubbery; and it was not long before approaching footsteps were heard on the pavement. She waited until the wayfarer was just opposite her bush, and then sprang out at him, weapon levelled. "Stick 'em up!" she commanded fiercely.

The pedestrian—a comfortable-looking middle-aged fat man—stopped in surprise. "What say?" he returned mildly.

"I say, stick up your mitts while I

frisk you!" reiterated the criminal. "And don't move unless you want a dose of cold lead in your ribs. And no back talk. I'm the Girl Bandit!"

She sounded so like a canary-bird talking English-sparrow that Bristow could not suppress a snort of laughter. He engulfed it in his handkerchief for fear of offending her; but he need not have troubled, for at the same time her victim exploded in a hearty guffaw.

"Girl bandit, hey?" he shouted. "Oh, that's a good one! You're a great joker, little girl. But you better run along home now; curfew's rung."

"I haven't any home!" refuted the girl bandit indignantly. "I'm a criminal! A desperate gun-girl! Why don't you call the police?"

"I'd be more likely to call your nurse," chuckled the victim. "Trot along, Gyp the Blood; you'll be late to school tomorrow." Laughing heartily, he passed on his way.

Bristow could not control his mirth. "Foiled again, villain!" he chortled.

Mary Ellen Knott came slowly back to the bench. She was deeply mortified, but still dauntless. "Laugh all you please," she said doggedly, "but I *will* hold up somebody, and I *will* get arrested. That was just bad luck. He didn't get a good look at me."

"Let the light fall on your face next time," advised Bristow in a shaking voice. "Look fierce; and don't go in for subtle conversational effects. Yell, 'Your money or your life' at 'em."

"That's a good idea; maybe the old tried-and-true methods are best," said the gun-girl; and taking the vanity-mirror out of her hand-bag she practiced ferocious frowns beneath the light. "How's this?" she inquired, turning toward him with the expression of an exasperated kitten.

"Freeze their blood," approved Bristow, putting his handkerchief to his face again.

"Lend me your pocket-knife; the glint along the gun-barrel is what finishes them," she added; and arranging her expression and her weapon care-

fully, she withdrew behind a lamppost at a little distance.

THIS time she had longer to wait, for it was late, and pedestrians were few. Bristow shivered on his bench, and was about to join her and beg her to give up, when footsteps were heard again on the main path. Another man came abreast of her; she jumped out at him like a puppy chasing a ball; and holding up her dangerous weapon she shouted ferociously, "Your money or your life!"

The new victim was a thin, dyspeptic-looking person, without the equable temper of the last one. He started visibly and looked distinctly annoyed. "Now what do you mean by this?" he demanded. "Jumping out on a person without any warning! You make me nervous."

"Nervous? I should think so!" said Mary Ellen indignantly. "Do you know who I am? I'm the Girl Bandit! I'm holding you up!"

"You're holding yourself up to ridicule," returned the victim acidly. "Go home to bed, for heaven's sake. You aren't as funny as you think you are." He began walking rapidly on.

Mary Ellen hurried after him. "Aren't you going to have me arrested?" she asked anxiously.

"You're arrested already," retorted the dyspeptic man witheringly over his shoulder. "Arrested development. you look sixteen, and you act six. . . ."

Mary Ellen came drooping back to Bristow's bench. This blow had taken the swagger out of her, and she looked daunted. She sat down beside him without comment, shivering; and he, touched by her dejection and her coldness, put a protecting arm around her shoulders. She cuddled against him as unselfconsciously as a child.

"Better give it up, dear," he counselled. "Better go home."

"Go home!" she repeated, stiffening indignantly. "Everybody tells me to go home! Why? Can't you see that

a respectable home and I have nothing in common? I tell you they wouldn't have me."

"I'm sure we could persuade them to take you in just for the night: and tomorrow I can raise some money. If I can't sell my drawings I'll get a job."

"Oh, tomorrow I can raise money myself; I can certainly get on the stage once I'm enriched by a disreputable experience. But I must disgrace myself, and I *must* sleep somewhere. And besides, I do hate to be balked; it's a point of self-respect with me to get arrested now. I'll tell you what! Let's go where there's a policeman near by, and I'll hold *you* up!"

Bristow weighed this plan. It had advantages, he could see; obviously she would never make a successful hold-up unless she had a subject who was in collusion; and if she must be arrested it ought to be soon, so that all hands could get some sleep. "All right," he agreed. "We'll find a policeman at the Sixty-sixth Street entrance, and there's a good lonely path right near. Let's go."

As they went she instructed him in the etiquette of the procedure. "You must walk along rather slowly, and I'll jump out from the bushes and threaten you. You must throw up your hands and shout 'Police!' in a tone of agonized terror; and keep shouting it at intervals until he comes. Then you must tell him—in gasps—how you were going along peacably, bothering no one, when this dangerous woman rushed out and assaulted and very nearly battered you. And for mercy's sake," she added severely, as she felt him shaking, "*don't laugh!* Can't *anybody* see that this is a serious matter but me?"

THEY soon found the policeman they were seeking, walking back and forth beneath the light on the corner. Slipping into the dark path while his back was turned, they staged their act according to the principal's directions. When, watching through the trees, they saw him facing in their direction, the gun-girl leapt out with upraised

weapon, squealing "Hands up!" and Bristow shouted "Police!" at half-minute intervals, like a well-regulated phonograph. They held the picture until the guardian of the law came bounding along the path.

"What's this!" he ejaculated.

"It's a hold-up," said the criminal in deep impressive chest-tones, like Peter Pan cowing the pirates.

The policeman looked incredulously from one to the other. "Who's doin' it?" he asked.

"I am!" averred Mary Ellen Knott. "I'm the Girl Bandit."

"Now looky here," said the policeman, didactically but not unkindly, "I got me work to do. I draw me pay for doin' it. I got no time to waste foolin' round with scofflaws. If you want to be funny, go to the Bozarts Ball or some place where they like that kind o' thing."

"But I'm serious!" said Mary Ellen indignantly.

"So'm I," returned the policeman. "I got no time for giddy-goatin'. Beat it, now."

"No, no!" protested Mary Ellen. "Arrest me! I *did* hold him up!—Didn't I?" she appealed to Bristow.

"Sure you did," affirmed Bristow. "Held me up higher than a kite."

"Some powerful Katrinka," commented the policeman, twinkling sympathetically at Bristow. "See if you can hold her up now, sir, long enough to get her home. Go to bed, miss, and sleep it off." He swung away with a rapid step, deaf to the gun-woman's entreaties. . . .

After this fiasco Mary Ellen was very severe with Bristow. She seemed to feel (perhaps not unjustifiably) that he had treated the situation with levity. "If you'd only carried it off properly," she scolded, "I might have been behind bars by now! Anyone would think that you didn't care in the least whether I get disgraced or not."

"Won't you be convinced that it's a flop, and go home?" pleaded Bristow.

"If that word passes your lips again I'll bite you!" exploded Mary Ellen.

"You leave me alone. I'm going now to be arrested on my own hook, without any help from you."

She marched away, high-headed and wrathful. Bristow followed at a little distance, very uneasy. He could see that her fighting blood was up, and he did not know to what lengths her inflamed ambition might lead her. When, presently, he saw her run another policeman to earth in a lonely spot and engage him determinedly in conversation, he stole up as close as he dared, and ambushed himself to overhear.

"Officer," said Mary Ellen determinedly, "arrest me."

The policeman turned with a start. "What for?" he asked.

"Vagrancy. Or disorderly conduct, if you like. I've been sleeping on a bench, so I'm a vagrant, and I've been holding people up, so I'm disorderly. If you want, I'll hit somebody and make it attempted homicide."

The policeman looked disturbed. "I couldn't arrest a nice young lady like you, miss, on none o' them counts," he protested. "You go home, miss; that's the place for you."

"If you say home to me, I—I'll knock your block off!" cried Mary Ellen furiously. "And if you don't arrest me, I'll report you for non-performance of duty. I'll do worse. Look here, my father's Judge Knott; he has a court here in this district; I'll tell him about you, and he'll have you dismissed. There now! Will you arrest me, or not?"

The policeman gazed at her reflectively. "You say you'll knock my block off if I tell you to go home?" he queried. "And you say Judge Knott is your father? And you're determined to be arrested?" She nodded yes to all three questions. "Very well, then," he concluded. "I guess I can arrest ye on a charge of unsound mind."

She gave a little joyful jump, and, whirling around, looked for Bristow and discovered his flimsy hiding-place. "Oh," she cried, running to him, "I'm arrested! And I'll be arraigned in

daddy's court! And won't he be furious! Just *think* of the headlines—Noted Jurist Disowns Disreputable Daughter; Respectable Girl Disgraced! Congratulate me: I'm made!"

Bristow took her hands and looked down at her anxiously. "You're sure you don't want to get out of it?" he asked.

"Get out of it!" exclaimed the small respectable girl. "Why, to be in it is the chance of a lifetime. Just think, I shall never be respectable again!"

III

BRISTOW passed an uneasy night, and rose early. Worry about Mary Ellen Knott sat heavy on his eyelids. It was all very well for her, in her complete ignorance of the world, to thirst for adventure, but he feared this adventure would be more than she had bargained for. He thought with a shudder of the revolting promiscuity of a night in the police station, of the soiling disillusionment of the contacts she must make, and of the horror with which she would regard her experience in the morning. He regretted bitterly that he had not insisted on bailing her out, even though he had nothing to bail with. As soon as he could find a pawnshop open, he disposed of his watch and his other cuff-links and his grandfather's pearl scarf-pin, and, thus equipped with some slim sinews of war, presented himself in the courtroom before the judge did.

He discovered her immediately, her trim neatness and her unabated air of respectability marking her out amongst her dingy surroundings like a whole white china dish in an ashcan. Making his way, with some difficulties and delays, to her side, he leaned toward her and greeted her anxiously. She lifted her little clean face to him with a start.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "It's you! Oh, I'm so glad it's you!"

There was no doubt about her being glad. Her face was as transparent as a child's, and at the sight of the swift leaping pleasure in it Bristow felt his

heart expand to double size. "I'm as glad as a gladiator myself," he said huskily. "Tell me, did you have a horrible night?"

"Oh, don't speak of it!" she answered, clouding again. "It was devastating! I've never been so disappointed since I was born! That policeman chaperoned me to the station as politely as if he'd been my godfather; and a respectable fat matron, just like my Auntie Lou, laid hold on me and put me into the cleanest bed I ever was in in my life; and there wasn't so much as a drunk-and-disorderly person in the room next to me; and I slept like a top; and I might *exactly* as well have been home! Such a *cruel* come-down!"

SHE LOOKED so tragic that Bristow did not dare to show the exuberant relief he felt; and before he could speak again there was a stir in the room which betokened the opening of court. The clerk called for order; there was a scraping and shuffling, and everybody rose; the judge came in and took his place; there was more scraping and shuffling; and then everybody sat down again.

Everybody, that is, except Mary Ellen Knott. She stood, erect and tense, like Joan of Arc at the stake. You could see that this was her great moment, and that she was not to be interfered with; she would be disgraced now or never.

The judge, arranging papers on his desk, became aware of the small standing figure, and looked up over his spectacles. He was a neat, smallish man, with a well-polished bald head, a well-shaven pink face, a well-brushed dark gray suit, and spats; his mouth was small and pursed, his ears large and shiny; he looked, if anything, even more respectable than Mary Ellen herself. For the first time Bristow had a flash of understanding sympathy for her revolt.

"Mary Ellen!" ejaculated the judge. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm a prisoner, your honor," said

the small girl, in an intense and solemn voice. "I'm waiting for you to sentence me."

"I'm more likely to spank you!" said the judge crossly. "I don't see where you get these silly ways; not from my side of the family. How did you get in—bribe somebody?"

"No, no!" cried Mary Ellen, wounded. "I got arrested, just like any criminal! Ask that policeman; he arrested me."

"What for?" demanded Judge Knott, turning to the policeman indicated.

"Well, your honor," said the public guardian, scratching his head, "she told me to arrest her, and said she'd knock my block off if I didn't, and said she was your daughter, so I run her in for unsound mind."

"You weren't so far off, at that," snapped the judge. "Charge dismissed. Mary Ellen, go straight home, and thank God you have such a good home to hide your silliness in. Clerk, call the first case."

IV

MARY ELLEN KNOTT turned away, and in deep silence walked slowly out of the room.

Bristow, following her closely, dared not speak. It was one of those moments to which no words can do justice, as the heroine's small set face showed. Her triumph had seemed so near; her great moment had been so perfectly staged, her disgrace had seemed so inevitable—and all she had got was one more command to go home!

They stood in the street,—Bristow solicitous but somehow happy, Mary Ellen completely woebegone, and just as respectable as ever. Minutes passed; the traffic rumbled by, the foot-passengers jostled them. Something had to be done.

"Well," she said at last, "here I am. No disgrace, no headlines, no experience, no job, no money.—I *won't* go home!—But if I don't, where in the world can I go?" She looked up at Bristow with anxious,

trusting eyes, like a good little dog.

Bristow's heart gave a big jump. She was so little, so appealing, so respectable—he couldn't let her go anywhere except where he could be. "Listen, dear!" he said breathlessly. "I know a perfectly good place—a studio apartment, with a kitchenette and everything. There are dishes in it already, and I have money enough now to get your luggage. Only—you'd have to go through the marriage ceremony first."

She looked at him with a shy, considering gaze, in which brightness began

to dawn. "I'd love it, if it weren't for the respectability," she said. "Still, it *isn't* respectable to get married to a man whose name you don't know, is it?"

Bristow squeezed her hand to keep himself from squeezing her. "You'll have to know it when its yours, darling," he reminded her.

"Oh dear!" said the small respectable girl. "It seems as if I just can't get away from it." But her eyes smiled happily. "Anyway, we'll have to have a license," she added, "and that's the lowest form of liberty."



Technique

By Louise de Salis

I LOOKED at Rostron Blake.

What was there about him that made him the Don Juan of two continents?

He was far from good-looking, and not even handsomely ugly. No wealth worth mentioning, and no ancestral background. Yet he never failed to win any woman he desired.

He caught me looking at him, and smiled:

"What's up?" he inquired.

"Everything! The whole bally show! Here am I, rather decent looking, yards of coin, and not quite an utter ass. And yet I can't get the only woman I've ever been keen on to as much as look at me. While you—"

Words failed me.

Blake smiled again.

"Keep cool! Bert! I'll give you the recipe. It's simple enough. Just keep this in mind. It's never failed me yet:—

A woman will love any man, if he pretends to believe her to be the exact opposite of what she really is."



A MAN buys a hat to keep his head warm. A woman buys a hat to keep her husband's love warm.

J There was no violence—the man was not bludgeoned . . . How did it happen, then, paving the way to the happiness of two people?

Murder?

By Marr Murray

I

WALDO BLOUNT surveyed his wife with a smile of leering anticipation.

"I've arranged a little treat for you," he said with a sneering solicitude.

Enid remained silent, dully awaiting the blow. This sort of thing had happened so often during their five years of married life that experience had taught her to maintain an attitude of indifference. Besides, there was some small satisfaction in denying him the satisfaction of seeing her wince.

"I met an old friend of yours today," went on Blount, his small eyes fixed upon her. "He has just returned from Burma. So I invited him to come along and have dinner with us this evening. Can you guess who it is?"

The merest shrug of her shoulders was the only sign that she had heard his question.

Her husband chuckled as he eyed her keenly.

"Jim Renshaw," he said.

Enid started and the colour vanished from her cheeks. She swayed unsteadily.

"Jim—" she gasped, involuntarily.

Then, with an effort, she regained command over herself. Pale and quivering, she faced her husband.

Blount laughed—the brutal guffaw of a bully who has succeeded in making his victim writhe.

"I thought you'd be pleased! A nice little triangular dinner party, eh? The

wife, her husband, and the man she hopes to marry if ever she has the good luck to be a widow! It'll be interesting!"

IT was four years since Jim Renshaw had last seen the Blounts.

From their meeting earlier in the day he had realized that Waldo Blount had not changed. He was still the fleshy, bull-necked, red-faced brute who had been famous throughout the East as the man who thrashed a Burmese servant to death for the crime of smashing a glass.

But Jim Renshaw was not interested in Waldo Blount. His sole purpose in accepting the invitation was to see Enid again.

She, too, had not changed. She still possessed that dainty, flower-like beauty which in the old days had set him wondering how on earth she had come to marry such a brute as Blount. It was so obvious that Blount was as incapable of appreciating her elfin charm as an ox was of appraising an exquisite piece of Dresden china.

It was not until they had taken their seats at the dinner table that Renshaw realized that Enid had changed in appearance, after all. Now that the light was full upon her, he could detect a curious dullness in her eyes—as if constant pain had robbed them of the faculty of smiling. He remembered having seen the same look in the eyes of Blount's native servants in the old days.

He was so taken aback at the discovery that he stopped short in the middle

of a sentence and for a moment stared at his hostess. Then a jeering chuckle caused him to glance at Blount, who was surveying him with smiling satisfaction.

At first he was puzzled. He had always assumed that Blount, in spite of his unsavory reputation in the East, had sufficient decency to appreciate Enid and treat her accordingly. But it was not long before he realized the true facts. Blount's every word was a taunt or a snarl directed at his wife. His attitude was blatant and swaggering. He seemed to find a keen pleasure in making it quite clear to Renshaw that in his home, as everywhere else, he was "Blount the brute." He seemed anxious that his guest should be under no illusion as to the reason for that look of dull agony which shrouded Enid's eyes. . . .

And for the past four years Jim Renshaw had been vainly trying to forget Enid Blount, the wonder woman of his dreams whom, by the whim of circumstance, he had not met until it was too late. For four years he had remained silent because he believed that even "Blount the brute" could not fail to reverence such fragile, elfin beauty, because he had known that his own love could bring her nothing but pain. Pain! For every moment of those four years Blount had been torturing her!

A fierce gust of fury swept through Jim Renshaw's soul. The desire seized him to leap to his feet, to send his fists crushing against that red, leering face, to grip that thick, fleshy throat. . . .

But they were not in some primitive eastern jungle where nature ruled supreme and a man could fight and win. Civilization would call it murder. There would be the sensational trial, the fierce glare of publicity—and more agony for Enid. It was not by murder that she could escape.

Was there any escape? Even if he succeeded in persuading her to leave Blount and to entrust herself to him, there would still be a price which Enid alone would have to pay. There would be social ostracism, or again the glare of publicity.

Blount chuckled, as if he fully under-

stood what was passing in his guest's mind.

At last the meal came to an end and Blount, making the excuse that he wanted to fetch some special cigars, rose from the table.

FOR some moments Enid and Jim Renshaw gazed at each other in silence.

"Enid!" gasped Renshaw at length. "He—"

"He no longer has the natives to bully," she said in a low, even voice, "so he bullies me instead. He told me before you came that his sole reason for inviting you was to have the pleasure of gloating over us."

Renshaw leaped to his feet, his fist clenched, his eyes ablaze.

"My God!" he cried thickly. "I'll—" Enid laid her hand upon his arm.

"Don't, Jim! All I can do is to wait until fate releases me. There is no short cut to freedom. I was a fool to marry him; but I didn't realize that until it was too late. I was a fool and I must pay the price of my folly. If you want to help me, if you want to make it easier, pretend that you don't notice, that you don't care. Remember that every sign you give only gives him added satisfaction—and makes it worse for me when you have gone."

Renshaw stood irresolute.

"Jim, it's the only way—I've proved it. Ignore him. Pretend you don't care. Jim, you promise?"

He nodded and resumed his seat.

Whistling contentedly to himself, Waldo Blount returned with a box of cigars under his arm. His small eyes, twinkling with merriment, glanced first at his wife and then at Renshaw. Then he chuckled in a way which left no doubt that he fully appreciated the humor of the situation.

II

"COME along, Renshaw," said Blount rising from his chair, "and I'll show you my chamber of horrors."

"Chamber of horrors?" echoed Renshaw.

Blount nodded.

"My collection of ju-jus, charms, talismans, totems, curses and bad luck generally," he explained. "There's only one finer collection in the world, and that's Thesiger's. You met Thesiger out East?"

"I met him once or twice."

"You aren't coming, I suppose?" said Blount, turning to his wife. "Scared stiff, as usual?"

"I'll wait for you in the drawing-room," she answered.

"All right," he said sneeringly as he went off with Renshaw to his study.

THE room was filled with glass cases containing examples of primitive superstition and magic from every quarter of the globe. There were Duk-duk headdresses from Papua, charms from Egypt, ju-jus from Africa.

With a swaggering satisfaction Blount surveyed his collection.

"I'm the only man alive, except Thesiger," he said, "who'd dare collect that lot. There isn't a thing there that doesn't mean sudden death—according to the witch doctors. And they're all good magic, too! Every piece has caused the death of at least one man. If you read those slips of paper you'll learn all the grisly details."

"Then you're magic proof?" suggested Renshaw.

"That's the idea," agreed Blount with a laugh. "It's simple enough—when you know the secret. It was Thesiger who put me up to it. He'd made a study o' the subject for years. He could have set up as a witch doctor himself. Well, you've been East so there's no need to tell you that these charms and spells and curses actually work. You've seen a nigger who's broken a tabu, curl up and die?"

Renshaw nodded.

"And maybe you've heard of a white man dying after a spell's been put upon him?"

"I know of one case where that happened," said Renshaw.

"It's the same in every case," said Blount. "The victim always knows that the spell's on him. It isn't magic that kills him; it's fear, his own imagination. That's the secret of all magic. I've never known what it is to be afraid, and so all these ju-jus and things can't touch me. But it'd be different with most people. They'd start wondering whether there wasn't something in the magic, after all. They'd get jumpy. Their nerves 'd go. They'd frighten themselves to death. Take Enid, now. If I were to give her that ju-ju there and tell her that a witch doctor had put a spell on it that'd bring the owner of the thing to the grave in a week, it's a million to one that she'd scare herself to death. It's a queer thing—imagination! And it plays all sorts o' tricks on those who are cursed with it. Not having any, I've got nothing to worry about."

There was silence for some moments. . . .

"Then you don't believe that it's possible for a spell to have any effect upon a man unless he actually knows that it has been put upon him?" asked Renshaw. "You believe that it is always a mixture of fear and imagination—never anything else?"

There was something in the quiet confidence of his tone that caused Blount to glance sharply at him.

"That's all it is," he answered. "Fear and imagination! I reckon this collection of mine proves it. If there was any real magic in these totems and things I should have been dead years ago."

"You haven't heard about Thesiger's death?" asked Renshaw in that same quiet tone. Blount started.

"Thesiger! I didn't know he was dead!" he returned. Renshaw glanced at him soberly. Then he continued—

"It was a mysterious affair. He was in his usual health—apparently as fit as a fiddle. But within twenty-four hours he wilted away and died. The doctors could not understand it and, right up to the last, Thesiger was as completely mystified as they were. For no appar-

ent reason he just quietly faded away."

Blount remained silent. For the first time since Jim Renshaw had arrived at the house that look of swaggering triumph was missing from his eyes.

"It was quite by chance that I learned the solution of the mystery," went on Renshaw. "I happened to be going up country and on my way met an old fellow who looked as if he was a hundred at least. I gave him a lift and we became the best of friends. He told me that he was a medicine man from Thibet who had come south at the request of the Burmese fakirs and magicians. They had become alarmed at the way Thesiger was boasting that all their magic depended upon fear and imagination and need not be taken seriously. Probably they were finding that Thesiger was having a bad effect upon business. In any case, the old yogi assured me that he had put a secret spell upon Thesiger which did not depend upon fear and imagination and which worked without the victim knowing that he was doomed. In a moment of friendliness he even told me the secret of the spell so that I could test it upon my own enemies."

"What was it?" asked Blount.

Renshaw smiled—a quiet smile in which there was just the faintest trace of mockery.

"He warned me," he answered, "that if ever I divulged the secret I should be dead within twenty-four hours."

THE time had come for the guest to depart and the three were standing in the hall.

As she watched Jim Renshaw buttoning up his coat, Enid marveled at the way he had kept the promise given her during her husband's brief absence from the dining-room.

She noticed the change the moment they had entered the drawing-room. Renshaw had been bright and talkative, apparently without a care in the world. It was her husband who had been quiet and preoccupied. He had lost his brutish swagger. He had even refrained from baiting her.

"Well, good-bye!" said Renshaw

briskly. "And thanks very much for a very pleasant evening! It's good to meet old friends again! Goodbye! Good-bye!"

As they shook hands the two men glanced at each other. And again that smile, mocking and enigmatical, hovered around Renshaw's lips.

A few moments later he had disappeared into the night.

Enid glanced at her husband, expecting some savage, jeering remark.

But he seemed oblivious to her presence. For some moments he stood staring at the closed door. Then, without saying a word, he strode into the dining-room and poured himself out a tumblerful of neat whisky.

III

SLEEP was impossible for Waldo Blount that night.

He could not forget that smile which had flitted across Renshaw's face. He could not forget the story of Thesiger's death.

And the yogi had told Renshaw the secret.

It might be that there were spells which did not depend upon fear and imagination, which could kill a man without his knowing that he was doomed. It might be! It was impossible to be quite sure!

He had not failed to note—and enjoy—the look of fierce hatred which had gleamed in Renshaw's eyes early in the evening. He had fully appreciated the fact that his guest had been tempted to seize him by the throat and throttle the life out of him.

It had been for that reason that he had invited Renshaw to dinner. He had wanted vengeance. . . .

ENID had met Jim Renshaw a few months after her marriage, when the last shreds of illusion had vanished and she had realized that her husband was indeed "Blount the brute." They had fallen in love and Blount had seen it. He had never forgotten for an instant and he had never allowed Enid to

forget that he was master of the situation.

But now . . .

Why had Renshaw smiled in that mocking, confident way? Was it a fact that the yogi had known some spell which did not depend upon fear and imagination and which worked in secret? Thesiger had died within twenty-four hours!

Dawn came. With a savage curse Blount flung himself out of bed and fell to pacing up and down the room.

What seemed an eternity passed and then at last the world began to stir.

He had been sitting for half an hour at the breakfast table when Enid came into the room.

She stopped short on the threshold and stood gazing at him with a look of amazement in her eyes.

"What the devil are you staring at?" he growled.

"You look ill!"

"I'm nothing of the sort!"

He leaped to his feet and strode over to the mirror on the mantelpiece.

A gasp, as of terror, came from his lips.

His face had lost its usual red hue. It was ashen. His cheeks hung flabbily beneath his dull eyes. There was a haggard, drawn look.

Suddenly he noticed that Enid was watching him.

Did she know? Had Renshaw told her of the secret spell that had killed Thesiger? Was she inwardly rejoicing in the belief that within a few hours she would escape at last from his tyranny? Was she gloating over his anguish as in the past he had gloated over hers?

His face twisted with rage; he turned upon her.

"What are you laughing at?" he cried thickly.

She shrank from him, her eyes wide with sudden terror. She had never known him like this before. He had always been the swaggering, masterful brute. Now there was something pitiful and contemptible about him.

"I—I wasn't laughing," she gulped. "I was wondering—"

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"I don't want any o' your damn lies!" he cried savagely, striking her on the face with such force that she fell against the wall.

It was the first time that he had struck her—he had always found satisfaction enough in the infliction of mental pain. The sight of the livid mark on her pallid cheek and of the trembling form of his wife as she crept from the room, sobered him. It made him realize, even more than the sight of his own reflection in the mirror, how much he had changed during the past few hours. Twelve hours before he had been chuckling with blustering triumph over the torture which he was inflicting on Enid and Jim Renshaw. Now he was in the grip of panic.

Twelve hours!

Renshaw had said that Thesiger had been dead within twenty-four hours!

In twelve hours' time—would—?

He heard the front door close—Enid had left him. She had left him—to die like a rat in a trap.

For a long time he stood there staring blankly into space. His great bulk seemed to shrink. His hands were trembling; his knees were bent. He looked broken.

Then again he saw his own reflection in the mirror.

With a curse he lurched from the room, seized his hat and went out.

IV

A DRIZZLING rain was falling and a cold wind blowing, but Blount was oblivious to the weather. As in a dream he shambled along the streets, heedless of direction and of the passers-by, his shoulders hunched, his head sunk forward onto his chest.

In the next twelve hours—what was going to happen? He had no doubt now that Renshaw had put the secret spell upon him—the spell which did not depend upon fear and imagination, which could kill without the victim knowing that he was doomed. He could see and feel how far it had dragged him down within the past few hours. He

knew that every moment was bringing him nearer and—

A shout, the blare of a klaxon horn, the skidding of wheels and a volley of abuse brought him back to reality.

Unheeding he had stepped off the pavement. The car had missed him by inches.

For a moment he stood cowering in the roadway, the cold sweat trickling down his cheeks as he realized that he had escaped death by a miracle.

Then, trembling, he regained the pavement and slunk homewards.

HUDDLED in a great armchair, Blount sat staring at the dead ashes in the grate before him. None of the servants had dared to enter the room to fix the fire. Probably they had all left the house.

On the table beside him stood a half empty bottle of whisky.

A cowering shudder swept through his bulky frame as the clock on the mantelpiece chimed two.

Eight hours more? Or six? Perhaps—?

Sitting up, he seized the bottle and gulped down its contents. Then, gasping for breath, he flung it aside. Slipping back into the depths of the chair he fell once more to staring at the cheerless grate.

Somehow, the cold, dead ashes seemed to remind him of Thesiger, the man who, like himself, had boasted that he was magic proof. They were mocking him. He could trace a smile in their fantastic shapes—like Renshaw's the previous evening—a quiet, enigmatical, mocking smile—

With a savage curse he sprang to his feet.

At that moment Renshaw was probably chuckling triumphantly!

And Enid?

Of course, she had gone straight to Renshaw's flat on leaving the house! They were together at that moment! They were congratulating themselves on the fact that within a few hours he would be dead! They were clasped in each other's arms—they were plan-

ning a honeymoon after his death.

His eyes blazed with fury. Then he laughed—a wild shriek of a laugh that echoed and re-echoed in the stillness of the house.

There were still a few hours left! There was still time to smash their dreams!

Laughing, he went over to the bureau and wrenched it open. Taking out a revolver he made sure that it was loaded and thrust it into his pocket.

A few moments later he slammed the street door behind him.

V

JIM RENSHAW was sitting at the writing table and gazing through the window at the roofs and chimneys opposite. From far below—his flat was on the ninth floor—came the murmur of the passing traffic.

It was a large window, reaching from the ceiling almost to the floor.

For some time he continued to gaze meditatively upon the scene before him, idly fingering the note which he had just written. Then suddenly he seemed to come to a decision. He put the note into an envelope, sealed it and addressed it.

"Martin!" he called.

His man came hurrying into the room.

"Yes, sir?"

Renshaw handed him the note.

"I want you to take that round to Mr. Waldo Blount at once. The address is on the envelope."

"Very good, sir."

Martin hurried from the room, closing the door after him. Renshaw resumed his meditative study of the roofs and chimneys.

Suddenly there was a snarling shout in the hall outside, a cry of alarm—a scuffle—

Renshaw leaped to his feet.

The next instant the door was flung open and Waldo Blount staggered into the room.

His eyes were ablaze with madness and fury. His face was livid. Through

his gaping mouth he was gasping for breath. In his right hand he held the revolver.

"Blount! You—"

A snarl of triumph was followed by the report of the revolver.

The bullet whirled past Renshaw's head and splattered against the wall.

Before a second shot could be fired Renshaw had sprung upon his enemy. It was his only chance—and he took it. A moment's delay and a bullet would have crashed into his brain.

A sharp wrench and the revolver fell clattering onto the floor. Renshaw kicked it aside.

A snarl of fury and Blount had his man by the throat. Renshaw tore himself free, but Blount attacked madly, hurling himself forward.

Wrenching, twisting, grappling, gasping, the two men staggered this way and that. Furniture fell crashing.

Far away, in the street below, Martin could be heard blowing a police whistle.

A POLICEMAN, followed by the hall porter, Martin and a couple of passers-by, rushed into the flat.

The two men were still struggling.

Blount had seized Renshaw by the collar of his coat and was endeavoring to drag him towards the window. With the strength of madness he heaved and tugged. His eyes gleamed with triumph as Renshaw vainly endeavored to tear himself free. With every moment Renshaw was weakening, but still he struggled desperately.

There was a sudden *rip* as the cloth

parted. Renshaw fell back into the arms of the policeman.

Blount staggered backwards, wildly clawing at the air.

There was a choking cry of terror as he struck the window. The crash of splintering glass. For an instant he struggled desperately to regain his balance. The hall porter rushed forward to save him. But before he could reach the window Blount had fallen through.

It was a sheer drop of sixty feet.

MARTIN, still pale and shaken, rushed into the room.

"The note, sir, that you gave me just before—"

He glanced toward the broken window.

"All right, Martin," said Renshaw, taking the note.

For some moments he stood grimly gazing at the missive. Then, shrugging his shoulders, he tore open the envelope and took out the note it contained.

Dear Blount:

When I realized yesterday evening what a fiendish brute you've been, I would gladly have murdered you. I told you that lie about Tesiger and the secret spell in the hope of giving you a fright. It seems that I succeeded. You fool! Can't you see that you're only proving your own theory?—that all spells depend solely upon fear and imagination?—that the secret of all black magic is to make the victim believe that he is doomed? . . .

There was not a trace of emotion on Jim Renshaw's face as he slowly tore the note into fragments and tossed them into the fire.



ANY man can forgive a woman for changing the whole course of his life; what he finds impossible is to forgive her for changing it every day.



LIFE: a humorous anecdote with the point left off.



She dreamed of a shining prince on a spotless white horse—a prince who would carry her away to a beautiful land somewhere beyond the dawn . . . But she worked nights in a public dance hall where all the princes were clowns who paid 15c a dance to stumble around the glistening floor with her . . .

Then she thought she saw him—her prince!—and she became so sure of it that . . . well—strange things can happen in

Shadowland

By F. Hugh Herbert

IT WAS Saturday night at Shadowland, and the atmosphere was heavy with the blended odors of tobacco smoke, cheap perfume, and perspiration.

Shadowland was one of the newest and the largest of the cheap dance halls which thrive in New York City. It was a great barn-like place, just off Columbus Circle, and, according to its verbose press agent, it "boasted of 40,000 square feet of polished hardwood floor dedicated to Terpsichore."

Every night of the week, and on several afternoons, thousands of young people, upon payment of seventy-five cents, obtained admission to its splendors.

Three jazz bands, continually alternating, provided loud, lively, and unceasing music. Two hundred hostesses—pleasant euphemism—were retained by the considerate management for the entertainment of unattached males.

MILDRED RUSSELL was a hostess at Shadowland. She had been there since it opened nine months ago, and was always greatly in demand. Her salary and commissions sometimes amounted to more than thirty dollars a

week. To earn this sum Mildred had to dance practically continuously for a minimum of five hours a day, and seven when there were afternoon sessions.

Mildred was a healthy, wholesome, ordinary young girl of twenty. She was very pretty and appealing in that vague and ephemeral way in which all young creatures are pretty and appealing. She was an orphan, but this condition did not worry her; she had never got along well with her parents anyway.

And Mildred loved Shadowland. She loved the surging, milling, cheerful crowds, the dim lights, the laughter, the music . . . everything. Contact with throngs, confused impressions, constant motion—such things always pleased her.

It amused her immensely to be a hostess, though it is not a profession which would appeal to everyone. Mildred's job, fundamentally, was to look and be attractive. That was easy enough. Nature, in her careless way, had endowed Mildred plentifully with physical charms. She was small, dainty, and slender. Her lithe young body was deliciously made of accommodating curves, and her piquant, powdered little

face, in the lights of Shadowland was eminently provocative and kissable.

Her work was comparatively simple. In company with the other two hundred "hostesses" Mildred was herded behind a species of pen, and her duty was to await, with becoming charm and modesty, the arrival of any man who, for a consideration of fifteen cents, had acquired the privilege of selecting her as partner in the next dance.

She never had to wait long. In fact, there were usually three or four young men who scowled at each other darkly, and disputed the privilege of Mildred's company for the ensuing number.

An attractive girl in a place like Shadowland soon acquires her "regulars." Sleek, well groomed, and rather extravagantly attired young men, of somewhat vague professions, but always plentifully supplied with cash, came nightly to Shadowland, and made standing appointments with such of the girls as met with their approval. Within a week after her employment Mildred had half a dozen "regulars." These young men came to the pen, proudly displaying a yard or so of tickets, and could then enjoy Mildred's company for perhaps an hour without interruption.

Unlike the other girls, Mildred didn't care to have regulars. She preferred variety. She soon found that the Bills and the Joes who made Shadowland their headquarters were extremely shallow and silly young men, with little or no power of conversation. They could discuss liquor in its various aspects and problems, and, perhaps, baseball or football, according to the season, but after these topics were exhausted they became silent and boring. Also, they all tried to get more from Mildred than they had contracted for in buying their fifteen-cent tickets. They would skillfully steer her into the convenient shadows from which the dance hall derived its name and try to kiss her.

Now Mildred was no prude, and she enjoyed skating on the thin ice of passion as much as any normal, healthy

girl, but these furtive fifteen-cent kisses made no appeal to her. Consequently she was no less dexterous in avoiding the amorous advances of her "regulars" than they were adept in attempting them. It was merely a sound business principle with her. Young men paid for dances, not kisses. Mildred had never got anything for nothing, and she didn't see why they should. . . .

Many people would have called Mildred a callous, mercenary little wretch. She accepted presents and invitations from these young men promiscuously. She cheerfully took anything a man had to offer, and in return she gave—nothing. Not even a kiss. And she laughed at the baffled discomfiture of her swains. She had a caustic tongue.

"Say! what do you expect for a bum lunch and cut-rate matinee, anyway?" she demanded of one man who had had the temerity to indicate that he hoped for certain privileges in return for his entertainment. "Want I should fall round your neck and worship you? Is that the lay-out?"

Bluntly, and covered with confusion, her host had admitted that such had been his thoughts. Mildred laughed—a pleasant, tinkling, musical laugh.

"Then you had oughta be ashamed of yourself—trying to tempt a poor working goil!"

And with that she had left him. Such incidents—and there were not a few—amused Mildred at first. But as they multiplied, and she was faced with a vista of hordes of ravenous men, she became cynical and callous. All men, she concluded, were beasts. On this theory she based her philosophy of life. Under the circumstances nobody could blame her for being callous and mercenary. On the contrary, it should be credited to her sound common sense. . . .

BUT Mildred had her dreams and her ideals. From the dim memories of her childhood she could recall wonderful fairy tales, told by an imaginative aunt—tales in which princes on white horses did battle for their princesses and ultimately rescued them and

made them happy. They were very vague, these memories, but sufficiently pervasive and encouraging to give her much hope and comfort today. She was not so childish and ingenuous as to suppose that a prince on a white horse would ride into Shadowland one night to claim her. But she was convinced that she would meet her destiny one evening in that super-heated dance hall . . . and she loved to let her thoughts dwell on this imaginary being, and to endow him with every possible virtue. . . . Every new man who came to claim her for a dance was rewarded with the same frank scrutiny from Mildred's big brown eyes, and always her breath came a little faster as she asked herself the question:

"Is *this*, perhaps, the man—my man?"

She found it very difficult to reconcile her thoughts about this imaginary man with her views on men in general. If all men were beastly—as she was rapidly beginning to believe—how could her man—her prince—be different? It was perplexing.

Nevertheless she continued to hope. After all, she reflected, all men were not equally beastly . . . some were even quite nice. . . . Some were youngsters, evidently moon-struck by her vivacious charm, and sincerely anxious to make her see that they really cared for her. But—alas—such admirers were also obviously poor. She could see, in spite of the bravado they mustered as they paid for their tickets to dance with her, that the pennies remaining were few. There was going to be no philandering in her young life unless it led to matrimony. That end she desired most passionately. Marriage—and a pretty little three-room apartment . . . and a nice, kind husband who would be proud of her, and tease her, and love her—and later on babies. . . . She loved babies. . . . Simple, honest, wholesome thoughts and dreams. . . . The dream of any normal girl who hungers for love . . . and for someone to love. . . . They seemed very remote and dim that Saturday evening. . . .

II

SHADOWLAND was more than usually crowded. There was a gala affair of some sort, with prizes for the best dancers. . . . It was past midnight and Mildred had been dancing steadily since eight. She was tired and rather depressed. Three of her "regulars" were bothering her—constantly trying to kiss her—and urging her to even greater concessions. . . . Distaste was written plainly on her pretty, rather petulant face. . . . Yes, all men were beastly. . . . Of course she could go home—she didn't *have* to dance with any of them any more. . . . But then she would lose their tickets, and tickets meant money, and Mildred needed money. Not that she was hard up—on the contrary, she probably had more saved than any girl at Shadowland—but in her occupation she *had* to look nice, and that entailed constant expenditure on shoes and silk stockings—dancing was so terribly hard on shoes and stockings—and then there were permanent waves and manicures. . . . She just *had* to stay. . . .

SHE danced without enthusiasm, however. In silence she took the tickets given to her by her succession of partners and permitted them to lead her onto the dance floor. Coldly and dispassionately she surveyed them one after the other—mentally classifying them as they came. . . . Salesman, clerk, soda-jerker, bookkeeper, chauffeur—a disappointing bunch. . . . And by some perverse trick of fate there was not a man who did not possess one or more of the physical defects which Mildred loathed. That night they all seemed to be afflicted either with clammy hands, or with large, active Adam's apples, or with pimples. . . . It was most depressing.

IT must have been well after midnight and Mildred had almost made up her mind to sacrifice the balance of her commissions for that evening and go home, when she met her prince!

She met him as she had already met hundreds of men—because he held a little blue ticket in his hand which entitled him to a dance with her, or with any of her two hundred colleagues. There was nothing remarkable about that. Nevertheless she knew the moment she saw him that he was the one man in the world for her, and her heart began to beat furiously beneath her pretty blue *crêpe de chine* dress.

She could see immediately that he was different. He wore a dinner jacket in the first place, which was sufficient in itself to distinguish him. The men who danced at Shadowland did not, as a rule, own such a garment. He was very tall and broad—Mildred failed to reach his shoulder by over an inch. Also he danced very badly. He stumbled all over Mildred, treading on her toes, and keeping up a running undertone of apology. After a minute he steered her to the side, where they found a couple of chairs.

"I'm hopeless," he said, as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead. He had a very pleasant voice, deep, vibrant, and caressing.

Mildred looked at him, made dumb by a sudden shyness. He looked so clean—and strong—in her dream that was how the prince had always looked.

"Let's try again," she ventured. "Maybe we'll hit it off better this time." She made as if to rise, but he put out a hand to restrain her.

"No," he said, with a laugh. "I know when I'm beaten! No more dancing tonight for me!" He leaned toward her confidentially.

"I never *can* dance when I'm half drunk," he said in a low tone. "When I'm sober or when I'm really well lit up, then I can hoof it with the best of them, but when I'm just moderately drunk—I'm the clumsiest lout you ever saw!"

Mildred stared at him in amazement. It was inconceivable to her that he was drunk. Men who were intoxicated didn't act like that. She had been called upon to deal with plenty. Men who were drunk were beastly. . . .

"You're not drunk!" she said slowly. He smiled at her, a slow, pleasant smile, revealing all his even white teeth.

"Oh, but I am!" he insisted quietly, and, as Mildred still looked incredulous, he added, "I wouldn't be here if I wasn't!"

"Don't you come here often?" she inquired.

"First time in my life," he assured her, and then, putting his hand over Mildred's where it lay on the arm of the wicker chair, "but now that I know you, it won't be the last!"

Mildred withdrew her hand gently but reluctantly. The brief contact had thrilled her, but she was by nature cautious, and this pleasant-voiced, well-dressed stranger, who claimed to be drunk seemed to be working rather rapidly and along familiar lines.

The orchestra crashed into the final bars of a popular number, and after the briefest of intervals another band struck up an air. Slowly Mildred rose from her chair, a stereotyped phrase on her lips. He had said nothing about another dance. Presumably she must go.

"Well," she said, "very glad to've metcha. . . . Hope I'll see you again. . . . I gotta go back to the desk."

He also rose.

"Must you go?" he asked. "Can't you sit out this one and talk to me? You've such a pretty voice! Do!"

Mildred began to stammer.

"Sure—I *could*!" she said faintly, "only y'see—I gotta get—I mean *you* gotta—s'more of these tickets—y'see—" She smiled. Suddenly it seemed so ludicrous that she should be compelled to make the prince buy tickets.

He fumbled in his vest pocket and produced a crumpled ten-dollar bill.

"Will this buy enough," he enquired, "so you can sit and talk to me till it's time to go home?"

She nodded, and held out a hand for the bill.

"I'll get enough for you," she told him, and slipped away.

AT the desk she had a struggle with her conscience. A glance at the clock showed that after four more dances Shadowland would close down for the night. Sixty cents was all that she *need* spend. And yet he had given her ten dollars—and she was quite sure that he would never ask for any change, or complain if he had any tickets left over. It was a great temptation—she needed a new dress badly. If it had been anyone else, Mildred would have compromised with her conscience. As it was, she bought just four tickets, which meant forty cents for herself, and hurried back to give him the change. She felt that she couldn't take his money that way. She was quite sure that he was her prince. He had the most wonderful eyes. . . .

For the next fifteen minutes she lay back comfortably in her armchair, and asked him shrewd, impertinent questions which amused him.

She learned that he was English, and that his name was Alfred Whetmore. He was staying at the Commodore and had drifted into Shadowland because he was bored. It appeared that he suffered from chronic boredom.

"Why did you pick *me* of all the girls here?" Mildred asked him rather breathlessly.

"To be perfectly honest with you," he answered, "I didn't pick you—you just happened to be the first in the line."

Then, as he watched her shy smile fading slowly, he hastily made amends.

"But I'll tell you something," he added. "Next time I come up, it'll be only for you—see?"

"Honest?" For no reason at all her heart was fluttering wildly. Dozens of men had said the same thing before without stirring her a particle.

"I always mean what I say!" He smiled at her in the friendliest possible way. Mildred thought he was the handsomest man she had ever seen. So tall and broad and strong—and clean. She had read somewhere that Englishmen always took a cold bath every morning, and a hot bath at night. . . . He looked as if he did that. . . .

THE crowd had thinned by now, and presently lights were switched off, and sleepy-looking colored janitors began to sweep up and drape the fixtures in dust sheets.

Mildred went to her locker for her fur coat. He had offered to take her home and she was thrilled at the prospect of riding all the way up town with this personable and amiable young giant.

They left the dance hall with Mildred's slim, gloved hand rather hesitatingly on his sleeve. She expected that he would call a taxi, but to her surprise he walked toward an expensive limousine. The driver seeing them approach, jumped from his seat, and held open the door. As if in a dream, Mildred gave her address, and presently they were gliding smoothly uptown through the park.

Alfred Whetmore was strangely silent, while Mildred was so stunned with surprise that she could think of nothing to say. A limousine—he owned a limousine! He must be frightfully rich. . . . And he had seemed to like her well enough. Perhaps—perhaps her dreams were really coming true. . . . She wondered why he made no effort to touch her in the car. All men did. Or at least those who rode in taxis did. That was why they took taxis.

The powerful car sped on its way. Mildred, half afraid, moved ever so slightly toward the corner where he sat with his head back on the soft cushions.

. . . Why on earth didn't he try to kiss her? Why didn't he even talk? Suddenly Mildred sat up and looked sharply at Mr. Alfred Whetmore. He was fast asleep. . . .

FOR a minute she was furious. The nerve—going off to sleep like that as if she were not there! It had never happened before in all her life. But when she paused to reflect, she had to admit that she had never met a man like Alfred Whetmore before. Maybe all Englishmen went to sleep when escorting their lady-friends home.

She decided not to wake him. That

had been her first impulse—to shake him and ask him, indignantly, how did he get that way? Instead, she moved imperceptibly nearer to him and studied his pleasant, bronzed face. There was a fascinating little scar on his cheek which he had told her was caused by shrapnel in the war. Mildred itched to trace the faint outline of that scar with her little finger. . . . Also, he had curly, crinkly hair, now matted in damp curls on his forehead. . . . She thought he was wonderful. Too good to be true. . . . And he slept soundly, only awakening in time to jump out of the car and say good night to her. As she ran up the steps of her rooming house, he stood by the car with his hat in his hand, waving to her. Once inside the house, Mildred flew to the parlor window to watch him drive off. She was just in time to see him climb into the car before the big limousine rolled silently out of the field of her vision. . . .

MILDRED lay awake for hours, and a fight was waged in her mind between the cynical, worldly Mildred who knew by bitter experience that all men were horrid, and the wistful, childlike Mildred who wanted to believe in fairy tales—and who wanted to love and be loved. . . .

"Forget him!" said the cynical side of her. "You'll never see him again, and if you do—he isn't for the likes of you!"

"Don't forget him!" protested the child, "at least you have met one man who wasn't horrid! Cherish that memory!"

But before she went to sleep the cynic won out. She was quite convinced that she would never see him again. It made her cry a little, and for the time, her life seemed very colorless and empty. . . .

III

IT was therefore all the more thrilling and wonderful when he turned up, not the next night, but the next afternoon. She was dancing with one of her

"regulars" when he entered the red plush portals of Shadowland. With a little squeal of excitement, Mildred slipped from the arms of her astounded partner and ran to greet him with starry eyes. . . .

"Oh! I *never* thought I'd see you again!" she cried. "I *never* thought you meant it! Gee! I *am* glad to see you!"

He smiled at her excitement and obvious sincerity.

"I'm sober today," he laughed. "I think I can dance." He displayed a string of tickets long enough to insure her company for the rest of the afternoon.

"That enough?" he inquired. She smiled happily and crammed the tickets into her bag. Together they stepped onto the dance floor.

He was not a good dancer, but Mildred, usually a very severe critic, never said a word. She was content to be in his arms, and to look up occasionally and catch his smiling glance.

After several minutes they strolled into the lounge, now practically deserted, for Shadowland was always sparsely filled in the afternoons. It was a large, ornate room, with much gilding and red plush. Plaster cupids adorned the walls and ceiling, while conveniently large brass cuspidors were much in evidence. There were a few discouraged looking palms in imitation marble pots, and plenty of comfortable armchairs. The lounge was given over in the evenings to discreetly amorous couples. . . . Nothing improper was tolerated at Shadowland, and eagle-eyed managers saw that decorum was enforced, but to those with sufficient self-control to keep their mutual affection within the bounds of kissing, the lounge was hospitably open. . . . Not officially, of course, but it was more or less understood that petting, in moderation, might be done in the lounge. . . .

"I want to apologize for last night," Whetmore began, almost immediately. "I behaved abominably—going to sleep like that! What *must* you think of me?"

"Oh, forget it!" said Mildred hap-

pily. "I guess you must of been awful tired or somep'in—forget it!"

"All right," he answered, "provided you've quite forgiven me?" His smile was full of amusement and his eyes twinkled. He fondled his bristly, blond mustache with a long and well-kept forefinger.

"I guess you could get away with murder—and be forgiven—by a woman," said Mildred quietly, meeting his glance.

His smile broadened at that, and presently he began to talk freely. He told her of his travels—he had been round the world twice, it appeared. Mildred listened with the rapt attention and the wide, open eyes of a child, as he told her tales of adventure in far-away India and Africa and other remote spots. From time to time, as he paused, she interjected:

"Oh, please go on—I love to hear about queer places and things." It was only too apparent that she meant what she said.

Mr. Alfred Whetmore, nothing loath, plunged anew into the recital of his experiences. Like every man, he appreciated a good listener, and not during his whole stay in New York had he found anyone so obviously delighted to hear him talk.

Mildred, accustomed to the banal chatter of half-educated youths, and to the clumsy pleasantries of traveling salesmen, listened to his narrative with genuine enjoyment. It seemed almost incredible that he had actually kept his word. . . . She had never expected to see him again. . . .

MILDRED was only twenty, and in those years she had known little enough of culture and refinement, but she had always admired it and aspired to it, regretting her own unlettered condition. Also it was given to her to have an unerring instinct for what was genuine, and Mr. Whetmore was genuine from the unruly curls on his well-shaped head to the elegant spats on his feet. There were plenty of men who had told Mildred tall stories of their achieve-

ments and their possessions, and she had always listened with polite interest, knowing perfectly well that they were lying. . . .

Here was somebody different—an Englishman of wealth and breeding, who had actually done all that he described. As she listened to his vibrant, well-bred voice, with its English accent, her thoughts were in some confusion. How did she measure up to him? What was he thinking of her, she wondered. . . .

Mildred's father had been a plumber and her mother the cashier at the cafeteria where he had been in the habit of taking his meals. Both had been honest, well-meaning people, utterly without education, and furthermore, without any desire for education. Therein Mildred, their only child, had differed from them. She wanted to learn. She wanted to better herself. But she had been sent out to work at the age of thirteen, and education had been subordinated to the need of earning a living. Then her parents had died, and Mildred, after trying various other professions, had become a dancing instructress. There was never time to learn anything—or opportunity. . . .

Thus, twenty found her a clean living, shrewd, rather cynical girl, with a little money saved, with not a little experience of men, but with vague hopes and dreams of a bigger and finer life to make her present existence tolerable. She was generous, warm-hearted, loyal. Also, she had two priceless and unusual assets—a remarkably developed sense of proportion, and a catholic and not astringent sense of humor.

Whetmore had broken off his recital now, and become suddenly and startlingly blunt.

"You know," he said slowly, "I like you—I like you very much!"

Mildred didn't quite know what to say to that. He was not smiling as he said it. That made it so difficult. There was no possibility of kidding him back. He himself was so obviously not kidding.

She began to stammer, and she was

convinced that he must hear the furious beating of her heart.

"Why—why do you like me?" she ventured at last. He ignored her question, to her mingled relief and regret.

"Why do you work up here in this cheap and rotten place?"

"I gotta work some place—ain't I?"

"Yes—but this must be awful! Waiting here to dance with every Tom, Dick or Harry who buys a ticket!"

"It is rather awful—sometimes—" she admitted, and then in a rush of words—"but what could I do else—I ain't had no education—I guess this is about all I *could* do!" There were both passion and pathos in her utterance.

"What would you like to do?" he asked gently.

She considered for a moment. There were so many things she would like to do.

"I dunno," she said at length. "There's so many things . . . things I'll never be able to do. . . . I get to thinking about them nights—when I'm in bed. I often think. . . ." She stopped abruptly and looked away from him. "I guess too much thinking ain't good for a girl when it'll never amount to *more* than thinking," she said rather bitterly.

Alfred Whetmore looked at her with surprise. There were tears in her eyes. Tears in the eyes of a little dance-hall girl who had unconsciously uncovered a sound philosophical truth. . . . He was immediately touched. He found her infinitely pathetic. . . .

WHETMORE, at thirty, considered himself a cynical and unemotional bachelor. In truth he was neither, for his life was dotted with impulsive and sentimental episodes. A fortune, inherited from his father, had enabled him to do whatever he pleased, and go wherever he liked, without the necessity of earning his living. He had many relatives, but there was only one for whom he cared—an aunt who had been his dead mother's favorite sister. Aunt Mary was the only member of his family to whom he wrote regularly, and in

her little home in Tunbridge Wells, she treasured a big box full of his letters from every corner of the globe.

There had been several women in his life, but he seemed to have an uncanny faculty for choosing women who, for one or more excellent reasons, were ineligible to become his wife. Two already possessed very worthy husbands who seemed destined to live to a ripe old age. Also, there had been a girl in the grip of tuberculosis who had loved him dearly, but had refused to marry him, and whose death was hastened by his too ready acquiescence in her decision. Another had been a queer, pretty little half-caste in a mountain village in Chili, who for a few foolish, exquisite months, had made of him a god. These were but memories now. He was heart whole and heart free. . . .

He had hosts of friends, on both sides of the Atlantic, and in most of the out-of-the-way corners of the world. For the past few years, however, he had divided his time fairly equally between England and America. New York was as familiar to him as London.

It was on a blind impulse that he had gone to Shadowland the previous night. He was on his way home after a somewhat convivial gathering, when the flickering lights of the dance hall had attracted him. His chauffeur had enlightened him as to the procedure to be adopted once inside the hall. On his evenings off, the chauffeur frequented Shadowland himself.

Whetmore had liked Mildred's modesty and gentle voice. She seemed so out of place in that shoddy, noisy throng. All day he had been reproaching himself for his behavior the previous night in falling asleep, and had made up his mind to see more of the girl. She was unusual and he was always attracted by anything or anybody out of the common run.

AND now she avoided his glance, and he saw tears in her eyes. He recalled her last words, and from his own experience knew how true it was that vain introspection and thoughts

without objective were painful and frightening. . . .

He put a hand firmly over hers.

"I want to talk to you," he said. "My car's outside—let's get away from this place."

She shook her head, and tried to withdraw her hand, but he held it firmly. There were strength and comfort in his grip. Mildred began to tremble. . . . A thousand crazy thoughts chased themselves through her brain. . . .

"Come!" he pleaded. "Please come!" He, too, was strangely stirred. Some telepathic communication had been established between them. . . . Vaguely he guessed what was passing through her mind—and she seemed to read his thoughts. . . .

"Aw—it's no use!" she whispered miserably, "you—you couldn't ever like me. . . . I'm only a common, silly, little—"

"Please come!" he interrupted. She pulled herself together with an effort, condemning herself unsparingly as a little fool . . . an impossible little fool . . . getting all worked up because some man wanted her to go automobile riding. . . .

"All right," she said. "I'll get my coat."

THEY drove through the park for some minutes in silence . . . each feeling rather foolish . . . and on the verge of some crisis. . . .

Whetmore was the first to speak.

"I've told you a lot about myself," he said. "Now tell me about yourself. Tell me everything—everything. I want to know—I must know!" He spoke with suppressed excitement.

Mildred, usually voluble, was speechless. . . . For the life of her she could think of nothing at that moment but a comic post-card—a card pinned above her bed. . . . It was a drawing of a lugubrious little boy with an enormous head—a ludicrous, charming, rather wistful little boy whose sentiments apparently were expressed in the foolish words beneath the drawing:

"I ain't done nothin'
Ain't seen nothin',
Ain't got nothin',
Don't want nothin'—
'Cept you."

Whetmore looked at the girl beside him and saw her lip tremble. She looked so small and pretty, huddled up in her squirrel coat. . . . Again she avoided his glance. . . . With nervous fingers, she plucked at the upholstery of the car. . . .

Suddenly she felt his arms go about her and he strained her to him. For an instant she resisted, and then she clung to him, pulling his head down to hers. . . . Passionately she kissed him, tasting on his cheek the salt of her own tears. . . .

Whetmore held her tightly to him, a strange lump in his throat. . . . Instinct told him that she yearned to hear something from him. . . . What could he say? His thoughts were too confused to determine whether this was love or passion or pity—or madness. He only knew that some force, greater than he could control, had compelled him to take her in his arms. . . .

She was limp now—content to rest her cheek against his shoulder. . . . She was afraid to move lest she should destroy an illusion. . . . She was far too deeply moved to trust herself to speak. . . .

"You're—you're sweet!" he murmured. "Dear—and sweet."

She lifted up her face like a baby to be kissed, and her soul was in her eyes. . . .

IV

THE next week was the happiest and most wonderful in Mildred's life. They were together constantly, and as their natural shyness wore off, they talked more freely, and each found a thousand things in the other to love. . . . Mildred, to whom a vacation was due, asked permission of the Shadowland authorities to take it now, and they spent wonderful days in the automobile, riding through Westchester County and

Long Island. In the evenings they went to the theatre, and in the darkness he always sought her hand, and she let it rest in his, trustfully and happily. . . .

They made wonderful plans for the future. . . . They would travel and she would learn all the things she had wanted to learn from his lips and not from dull books. . . .

Tremulously she had told him of her childish dreams about the prince and the white horse, and he had smiled and hugged her and said "Oh, you funny, dear, silly little person—I don't know whether you're crazy or whether I'm crazy, or whether we're *both* crazy—but we'll make each other happy, won't we?"

He wanted to marry her at once, and start on their honeymoon, but Mildred wouldn't.

"You said yourself that maybe we're both crazy—let's wait—just a couple weeks—and see if we wake up in Bellevue. Yes?"

He was agreeable to that. He was agreeable to anything she suggested in those days. It had always been one of his failings that he was careless and carefree in his thinking. He knew, of course, that people would call him a fool for marrying a girl like Mildred. That wouldn't worry him. He was accustomed to doing what he wanted, and the opinion of others seldom influenced him. Aunt Mary would be shocked, but when she saw Mildred she would understand. Mildred was so sweet. He loved her with an intensity that hurt. He was quite sure that his love would endure till death. She hungered for love so pathetically . . . she loved him with that strange admixture of fierce passion and overwhelming tenderness which is so desirable and so compelling. . . .

And Mildred? Mildred was investing her careful savings in a trousseau. He wanted to give her any money she needed so that she could buy all that her heart desired, but she wouldn't take a penny. She had seven hundred dollars saved, and she knew half a dozen little

stores where that sum could be made to appear three times its size.

She was radiantly happy, and she gave him such adoration as neither he nor she had ever dreamed of. . . .

SEVERAL days before they were to marry, he came to her, boyishly excited.

"Sweetheart—I just couldn't keep the secret any longer!" he confessed. "I told a great friend of mine, and she wants to give a party for us! Do you want to go? Please do—I want to show you to my friends."

She smiled tolerantly. He always got so enthusiastic about everything. That was one of the things she loved about him most—his infinite capacity for being enthusiastic. No matter what it was—a party, a sunset, a play, or a cocktail—he enjoyed every bit of it with an ardor that all his thirty years had not dulled.

"Who—who are your friends?" she enquired.

"Mrs. Van Ressler—she's a sort of third cousin ten times removed."

Mildred paled. She knew, of course, that he was wont to move in circles of which she had only read, but this cold reality was none the less disturbing.

"The Mrs. Van Ressler?" she asked dubiously.

He smiled at her unhappy expression.

"Yes, darling—but she won't bite you! She's really rather a dear. You'll like her!"

"But—do you think—do you think she'll like me?"

He put his arms around her, giving her a boyish hug that made her blood tingle.

"Don't fish for compliments," he teased. "I've told you twice today that you're the sweetest thing that ever happened, and that's quite enough!" But Mildred was not happy about it. Mrs. Van Ressler—a society hostess whose picture was always in the papers—Mrs. Van Ressler—the Mrs. Van Ressler, with her town home, and half a dozen country places—what would she think of her?

The day of the party she spent in anguish. She was convinced that she would disgrace her lover . . . that she would make some bad break and humiliate herself and him. Rather pathetically she studied an old-fashioned book on Social Usages, known more familiarly today as the Book of Etiquette.

She was sick with fear when Whetmore came to call for her. . . . She had put on a modest little black evening dress, and had spent hours on her toilette. . . . She had not dared to put on much rouge or lip stick . . . though she knew that she was pale and that her lips were dry and colorless.

In the car she clutched his hand tightly, like a child, and could not speak a word. Whetmore was carried back many years in memory to the time when he had taken a little ten-year-old niece to Drury Lane Pantomime. . . .

As he helped her out of the car he squeezed her arm reassuringly.

"Remember all the time that I love you," he said. She flashed him a quick look of thanks.

IT is a remarkable tribute to the movies, more than anything, that Mildred got through that evening without any serious mishap. She was painfully nervous, of course, and hardly dared to open her mouth, but she met the Mrs. Van Ressler and was introduced to many of Whetmore's friends. . . . It was all just like one of the society dramas she was so fond of seeing. The majority of the men thought she was rather cute, while the women, more observant and less kind, discussed among themselves, the strange infatuation of Alfred Whetmore for such a pretty, but common little person. . . .

Whetmore himself was entirely satisfied. He was delighted with Mildred's appearance and bearing, and he congratulated himself on his great discernment. He thoroughly enjoyed the party, drank a great deal of excellent champagne, and it never once entered his amiable head to doubt that Mildred was having an equally good time. . . .

Mildred was tight-lipped and silent

as they drove home in the car, while Whetmore was talkative and happy. . . . He tried to draw her into his arms, but she huddled up in a far corner and was unresponsive to his caresses. . . . Her hands were icy cold . . . and her heart was like lead. . . . It was only with a supreme effort that she forced back the torrent of tears as he sleepily kissed her good night. . . .

Once in the haven of her room, Mildred threw herself on the bed, and sobbed pitifully. . . .

In her distorted imagination she saw the whole ghastly evening in retrospect, and decided that she had shamed her lover. . . . Every tiny little mistake seemed enormously magnified. . . . Though actually she had made a distinctly favorable impression, she was convinced that Whetmore's friends had considered her impossible. . . .

They would always think her impossible. . . . She was quite sure they would. . . . She was a little fool to think that she could marry a man like Alfred Whetmore and get away with it.

. . . Mildred Russell, daughter of a plumber, instructress at Shadowland, aspiring to marry Alfred Whetmore. . . . A truck driver or a shipping clerk—that was what she was fitted for. . . .

Her passion of tears had abated now, and she lay there quiet, growing very cold, with a horrible, awful emptiness in her heart. . . . A very pathetic little figure, she made, in her rumpled evening dress, her face buried in the counterpane, and her restless, twitching fingers gripping the iron bed posts. . . . Presently she began to cry again—not the passionate, intense sobbing of a woman, but the piteous, hopeless, helpless whimper of a child. . . . She raised her face on her elbows, and with streaming eyes, looked at a little card pinned at the head of her bed.

"I ain't done nothin'
Ain't seen nothin',
Ain't got nothin',
Don't want nothin'—
'Cept you."

In a sudden fury she took the card and tore it to shreds. . . .

Presently, shivering, and with little gasps and sobs, she crawled miserably into bed. But she had made her brave, unselfish resolve. She was never going to see Whetmore again. . . . She had shamed him—she would always be shaming him. . . . He would grow to hate her. . . . Better to leave him now—he would soon forget. . . . Men were like that. . . . She had been a little fool to think that she could go through with it. . . . The days of fairy tales were gone. There would be no prince in her life. Maybe—later—she would meet some man of her own class—who would ask her to marry him—and then she would have that little three-room apartment after all—and the babies. . . . And meanwhile—she had so many lovely memories. Those would help. . . .

V

SHE sent him a little note early the next morning, telling him of her decision. She was so sure that he had been ashamed of her that she was convinced he would be immensely relieved. In fact she made a point of sending her note very early, because she was half afraid that there might be a note from him to the same effect. . . . And she could not have borne that—she always wanted the meager satisfaction of knowing that she had had the courage to take the initiative. . . .

She sent the note by a special messenger, and her original intention had been to go out immediately afterwards, or maybe to leave town for a few days. She could go to visit a friend in Philadelphia. But instead she hung about the house. . . . She didn't admit it even to herself, but she thought perhaps he might answer the note. . . .

The laggard hours went by, and the messenger failed to return. Surely he had her note by now? Probably he too would leave town. . . .

As twilight fell, Mildred still sat in her little bedroom, cold and terribly unhappy. She had eaten scarcely a thing all day. . . . All around her were the gay boxes in which her trousseau had

come. By the window stood a brand new wardrobe trunk—mocking symbol of a honeymoon that she would never enjoy. . . . She looked pale and ill. Her eyes were dull and without life. All her dreams and hopes had been smashed—and there was small comfort in the reflection that she had made a sacrifice for the man she loved. . . . As the hours had gone by, Mildred had felt very bitter. Surely if he loved her—if he had really loved her—he wouldn't have taken her note as final. . . . He would have tried to see her—to persuade her that she was wrong—that their love could bridge the gulf of their different classes. . . .

A neighboring clock struck eight. For twelve hours now Mildred had not stirred from her room. She felt suddenly that she would go mad if she stayed there any longer. Feverishly she began to dress, and with reckless abandon she applied rouge and lipstick. . . . She would go back to Shadowland. . . . She would be like the other girls—have her "regulars" and maybe allow one or two of them special privileges—for a consideration. Why not? Other girls did. . . .

Hurriedly she took her coat, and in the same spirit of recklessness, jumped into a taxi to go downtown. . . .

It was Saturday night again at Shadowland. . . . As Mildred joined the throng of girls at the desk she was bombarded with questions from all sides. She was popular alike with the girls as with the men. . . .

For a moment she felt disgusted. . . . The oppressively hot air—the noise and the confusion—the packed crowds, endlessly moving. . . . Leering, unshaven, pimply faces again—hot hands—gin-laden breaths—the awful necessity of smiling at the inanities of perfect strangers. . . . Fat, unhealthy-looking men who held her too tightly—wan, shy youths with clammy hands, who smirked at her. . . . The colored lights dimly twinkling. It was all so cheap and beastly. . . . And she was part of it. . . .

She threw back her head. There was

no use wasting time over vain regrets. Heartaches didn't get you anywhere. . . .

She began to laugh. . . . The band was playing "I Don't Know Why I Should Cry Over You."

"Come on!" said Mildred, "let's go!" and she stepped onto the dance floor. She was about half way round the room when she became aware of a commotion by the door. With the uncanny instinct of crowds for something amiss, couples began to crowd in that direction. Mildred and her partner joined the throng. Mildred wormed her way to the front. Faintly, above the hubbub, she had heard a voice—a voice which she would have recognized anywhere. . . .

Instantly she saw him. Whetmore was flushed and excited. He was holding the stolid colored commissionaire by the collar and shaking him violently.

"Where is she? Where is she?" he was demanding frantically. "For God's sake man, find her!"

A sudden hush fell over the crowd. They did not know what it was all about, but here was a man who looked as if he usually got what he wanted. The manager edged nervously toward him.

"What's all this about—eh?" he blustered. "You can't come in here like

this and beat up my help! I'd like to know—" What he desired to know was never divulged.

It was at this moment that Mildred fainted. She collapsed like a wisp of silk, crumpling to the floor with a little gasp of dismay at her own weakness. Instantly, and at one stride, Whetmore was by her side, and picked her up in his arms. A girl hastily fetched her coat and put it gently over her. Then he strode through the crowd with his light burden, magnificently disdaining any explanation, and carried her to his car. . . .

As they sped up town she lay in his arms like a baby. She was slowly regaining consciousness.

"What happened?" she asked drowsily.

"I was out all day, and I only found your note half an hour ago," he told her. "I drove straight to your house and the landlady said you'd gone to the dance hall, so I followed."

"You shouldn't have," she whispered—"I belong to Shadowland—you don't! I couldn't ever make you happy—you'd be ashamed of me. . . . Leave me go. . . . Let me go back to Shadowland—that's where I belong. . . ."

"Rubbish!" he said, with a catch in his voice—and stopped all further argument with a kiss. . . .



THE divorce court often shortens a life sentence, but not for good conduct.



HOME is not always where the hat is.



MARRIAGE: the course that ruins the dinner.



IF YOU HAD A FACE LIKE A MONKEY

you would try to change it. But just because you wear a pair of pants and a coat to cover the rest of your body you don't seem to care a rap what you look like from the neck down. Come on out of it, fellows. Get wise. Don't you know you can't keep this up? It's only a few years and ZOWIE it's too late. Your body is clogging up with all kinds of poisons. The only way to get rid of these poisons is to drive them out. Exercise wears off the worthless tissue, the blood carries it to the surface and then you sweat it out through your pores. That's simple enough. But if you don't, your blood will absorb all this poison and soon you're nothing but a human wreck.

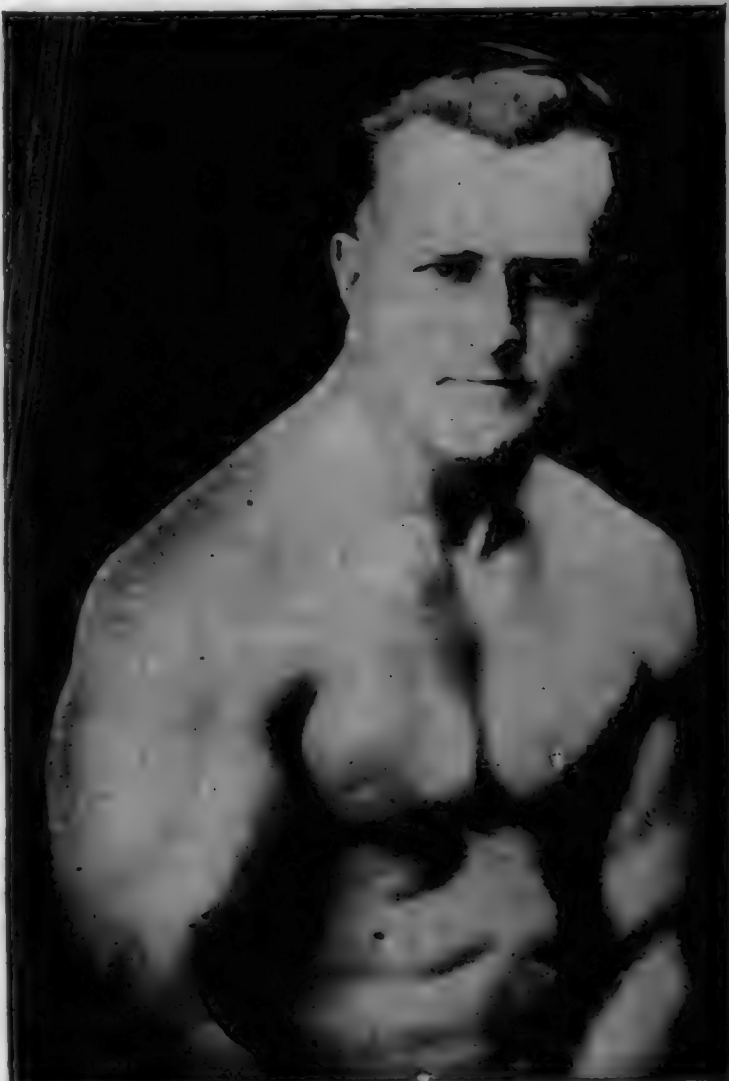
I MAKE STRONG MEN

No one likes to look at a narrow-shouldered, flat-chested dyspeptic. Such a man is no good to himself or anyone else. It's the strong, robust, energetic man who gets ahead. He is admired and sought after in both the business and social world. No matter where you find such a man, he is the whole works.

Come on then—snap into it. Right now—this minute. This is your day. This message was meant for you or you wouldn't be reading it. I'm all set and waiting for you, and oh boy! what I do to you will sure open your eyes. I'm going to push out that chest of yours, broaden your shoulders and put a pair of arms on you that will carry the kick of a mule. I'm going to build up your whole body with good, solid muscle. I'm going to strengthen every vital organ and shoot a quiver up your old spine that will make you feel like a jack rabbit.

I CAN DO IT

Just because a man is built like an ox doesn't mean he can show you how to be the same way. There are plenty of strong men today who couldn't tell you how they ever did it. I made my reputation teaching and building others. And my biggest achievements have been made during the past year—not ten years ago. My instructions are modern and up-to-date. When you come to me your success is assured. I don't promise strength—I guarantee it. Are you ready? Let's go.



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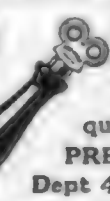
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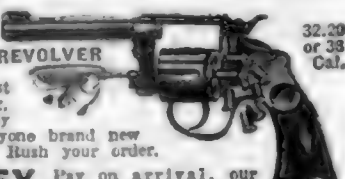
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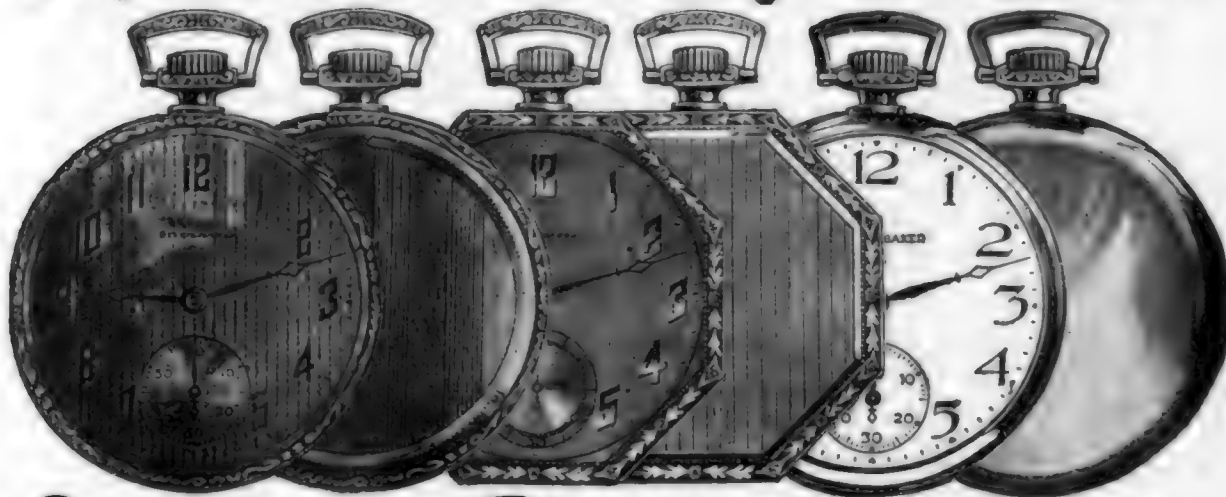
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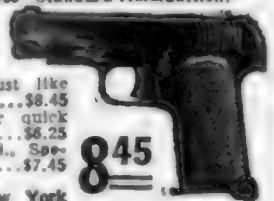
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Massive "He-Man's gun of genuine Bessemer steel" with a wonderful reputation for dependability and accuracy. Beautifully finished mottled frame. Six shots. Similar models retailing today at \$42.50. Specially priced at \$17.45 to clean out a limited stock on hand.
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I personally request every gray haired person to write for my patented Free Trial package, and let me prove how easily, quickly and surely gray, faded or discolored hair can be restored to its perfect, natural color.

This offer would be impossible if I couldn't guarantee results. But I perfected my Restorer to bring back the original color to my own prematurely gray hair, and I know just what it will do.

My Restorer is a clear, colorless liquid, clean as water. Doesn't interfere with shampooing. Nothing to wash or rub off. Restored hair perfectly natural in all lights, no streaking or discoloration.

MAIL COUPON TODAY

Send today for the special patented Free Trial package which contains a trial bottle of my Restorer and full instructions for making the convincing test on one lock of hair. Indicate color of hair with X. Print name and address plainly. If possible, enclose a lock of your hair in your letter.

FREE TRIAL COUPON

Please print your name and address—

Mary T. Goldman,
212-L Goldman Bldg., St. Paul, Minn.

Please send your patented Free Trial Outfit. X shows color of hair. Black..... dark brown..... medium brown..... auburn (dark red)..... light brown..... light auburn (light red)..... blonde.....

Name.....

Street.....City.....

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Coloring and selling our 1924 Line of Christmas Greeting Cards and Fold-ers. Exclusive designs, beautiful sentiments. Made especially for hand-coloring. Big demand for hand-colored cards. Easy to do.

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\$2.63 \$3.25

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WEAR SEVEN FREE DAYS

OUR MARVELOUS MEXICAN DIAMONDS

have delighted thousands of customers for 18 years. They positively match genuine diamonds. Same perfect cut, same dazzling play of rainbow fire. Stand intense acid test of side by side comparison with genuine. Noted experts positively need their experience to detect any difference whatsoever. Perhaps the gems you admire on your closest friends are MEXICAN DIAMONDS and you never know it. Test a MEXICAN DIAMOND FREE; you risk nothing. Wear it seven days side by side with a genuine diamond. If you see any difference, send it back; it won't cost you a cent.

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To introduce to new customers, we quote these prices which are all you pay and just half our catalog prices.

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SEND NO MONEY Just send name, address and slip of paper that meets around ring finger to show size. Say which ring you want. We ship promptly. On arrival, deposit price with postman. If you decide not to keep it, return in 7 days and we'll refund your money. Write TODAY. Agents wanted.

MEXICAN DIAMOND IMPORTING CO.
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Exclusive Controllers of Mexican Diamonds for 18 years.

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Enormous demand, no competition. Simply show your samples, write the order, collect your commissions in advance! We deliver and collect balance. You make \$35 to \$65 a week spare time, \$75 to \$125 a week full time. 10% repeat orders mean a steady income, \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year for you!

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Made exactly like the real thing! Just pull the trigger, back flies the lid showing a full package of your cigarettes.

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New SPREDTOP RING

MAKES DIAMONDS LOOK LARGER

WHY spend \$500 for a solitaire? This new scientifically constructed Spreadtop 7-Diamond Cluster ring has same appearance. Send for this Spreadtop, examine it, be convinced of its value, then pay **ONLY \$5.00 DOWN**

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Why pay the price? Spare yourself untold misery. Don't marry until you have read our wonderful book by a foremost Birth Control Authority. Tells simply and clearly all you should know about BIRTH CONTROL, Marriage, etc. Discusses the following subjects: Too Many Children; Birth Control Methods; Prevention of Conception; Private Advice to Women; Science of Eugenics, (over 200 pages, cloth bound). ALSO, for a limited time only, "What Every Mother Should Know" by Margaret Sanger, great Birth Control Advocate. **SEND NO MONEY.** When the TWO books arrive, pay postman only \$2.50 plus postage.

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I have made Astrology my life's work and offer the most interesting astrological interpretations of the Zodiac sign under which you were born. Send exact name, address and exact date of birth in own handwriting and receive your astrological interpretation in plain sealed envelope, postpaid. A great surprise awaits you. Enclose 12c to cover cost of this notice and mailing. Address me personally—DHASSI.

TARA STUDIO, 1133 Broadway, Desk 62, NEW YORK

A Lesson on Chiropractic

WHEN you wish your arm, hand, leg or any other part of the body to do something, a message is sent to that member over the nerves.

If the nerve over which the message travels is pinched, the message cannot get to the member to which it was directed, the member does not obey the mind, and it then is what we call diseased.

Chiropractic teaches that all the work that is done in the living body is done by an intelligent power within by means of functional impulses sent over the nerves, and that disease is the result of an interference with the normal transmission of these functional impulses over the nerves.

Chiropractic teaches that your arm or leg will obey the mind if the channel over which the moving or motor impulse is open and normal; but that if a segment of the spine becomes slightly misaligned and presses on the nerve, thereby stopping the motor impulse, the result is what is called paralysis.

The accompanying cut shows how the nerves, over which all functional impulses are sent, come out through the spinal windows between the vertebrae, and how a misaligned vertebra

may press upon or impinge the nerves, thus interfering with the flow of functional impulses, which causes dis-ease.

To adjust the vertebra to normal, thereby removing the cause of disease, is the work of the chiropractor.

Thousands have realized that paralysis is simply a



THIS NERVE
MEANS HEALTH
and
HAPPINESS

THIS
PINCHED NERVE
MEANS SICKNESS
and
DISEASE

lack of motor impulse to the affected part, when complete recovery followed the release of the prisoned functional impulse through the adjustment of the misaligned vertebra by a competent chiropractor.

And Yet Some Say:
"I Don't Believe in Chiropractic"
What a Pity!

The Hon. J. R. Morly, of Owatonna, Minn., under date of November 4th, 1922, says:

"In June, 1919, I met with a severe automobile accident which injured my spine. As a result of the injury I became paralyzed on the left side. My left hand and arm were practically dead and my left leg was so affected that I could only walk with someone to support the left side. My family and friends were much concerned and doubtful about my recovery. I immediately consulted a chiropractor, who advised me to have a spinograph taken. After this I commenced taking adjustments and have now regained the use of my left hand and can walk naturally. I would advise anyone suffering from similar trouble to consult a chiropractor."



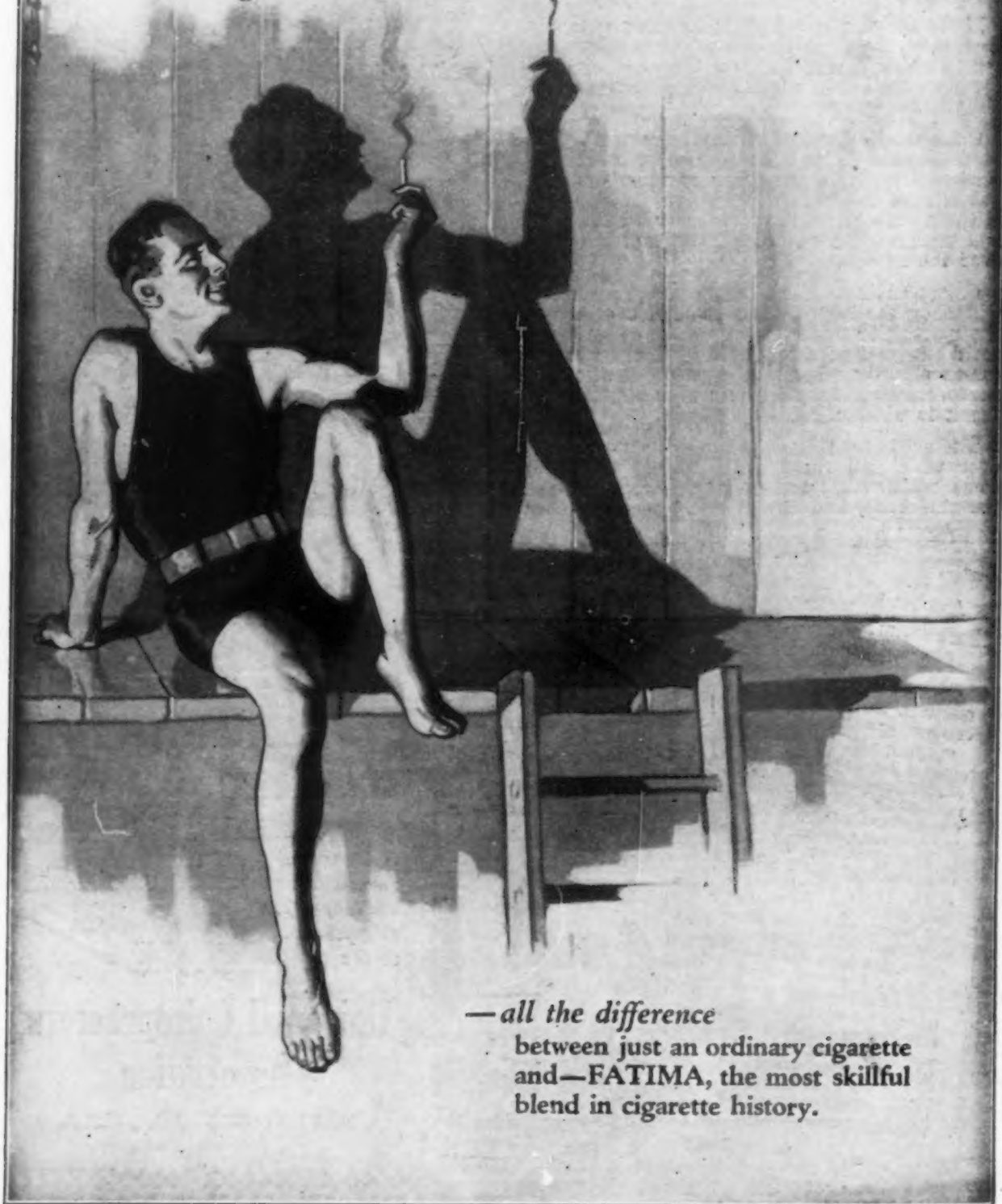
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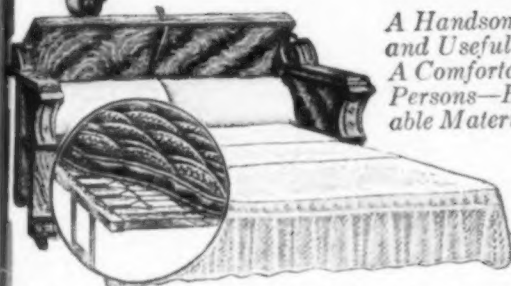
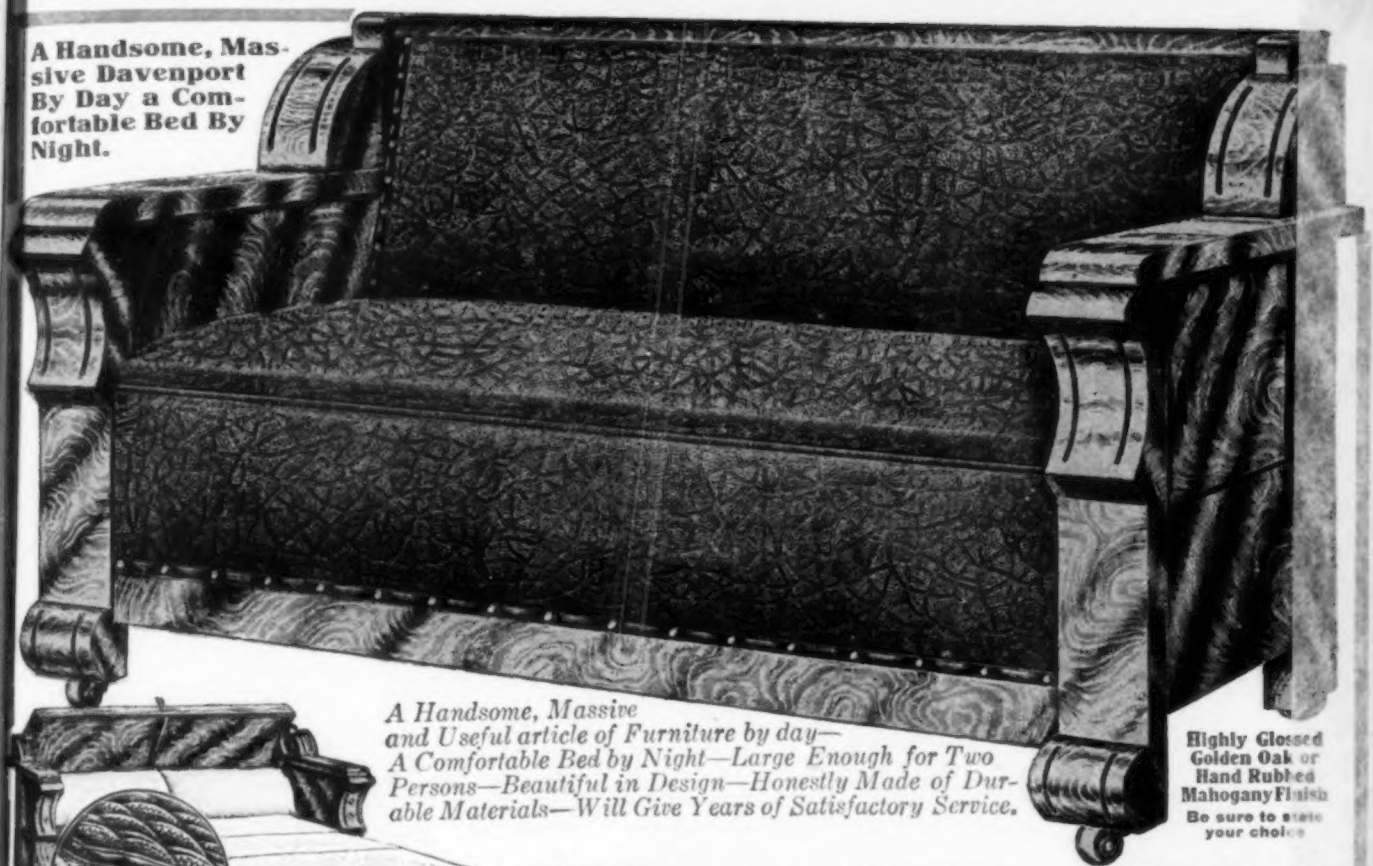
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just a few cents make!”



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between just an ordinary cigarette
and—FATIMA, the most skillful
blend in cigarette history.

A Handsome, Massive Davenport By Day a Comfortable Bed By Night.



A Handsome, Massive and Useful article of Furniture by day—A Comfortable Bed by Night—Large Enough for Two Persons—Beautiful in Design—Honestly Made of Durable Materials—Will Give Years of Satisfactory Service.

Highly Glossed Golden Oak or Hand Rubbed Mahogany Finish
Be sure to state your choice

This picture shows Bed Davenport open—ready for use as a bed. Circular insert shows portion of mattress and spring. No extra charge is made for the mattress; it is included with this Bed Davenport. Bed measures 72 x 46 inches—large enough for two persons. Be sure to state whether you want the Oak or Mahogany Finish.

NOT A PENNY EXTRA FOR MATTRESS To make this offer additionally attractive I am including at positively no extra cost a comfortable, rest-giving 18 pound quality cotton mattress. It is covered with a good wearing grade floral art ticking of an attractive design. Mattress is made especially for the Davenport; fits it perfectly.

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Construction and Materials: Built of solid oak and hard wood, selected and well seasoned. Strong, handsome arms and Colonial Design front posts 3½ inches wide. **Finish and Upholstery:** Choice of two beautiful finishes—Rich Golden Oak or Hand rubbed Mahogany. Seat and Back covered with excellent grade of Brown Spanish artificial leather that will give enduring service. Non-Sag Seat is built over an 18 oil tempered coil spring support covered with heavy duck canvas and an abundance of sanitary, resilient upholstering materials. This Davenport is desirable for medium sized homes. When closed it takes up only 58 inches of wall space, yet open it is a comfortable bed for two people. **Bed Features:** You do not sleep on the upholstery, but on a separate and comfortable bed spring, built into the Davenport. To make up the bed, unfold seat with one easy motion; the mattress and bedding are all ready in position on the spring. **With the outfit comes an 18 pound restful cotton mattress covered with a good floral art ticking, for which not one penny extra is charged.** Bed is 46 inches wide by 72 inches long—large size. One easy motion closes the Davenport and conceals the bedding, which is out of sight all day. Opens and closes easily. A child can operate it. **Be sure to state your Choice of Finish, Oak or Mahogany. Order No. RA1530. Price \$39.95. Terms: \$1 with order, balance \$3 Monthly.**

Nathaniel Spear
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Home Furnishers for the People of America

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I want this Bed Davenport to be its own salesman. I want to send it to you at my risk on 30 Days' Trial. I want you to use it every day and every night just as if it were your own. I want you to know from actual experience, its attractiveness by day, its comfort by night. Then if your satisfaction is not complete, I want you to return the Davenport. I will refund your first payment and all freight charges. The trial will not cost you a penny.

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But the next morning! Unless you have learned how to avoid it your personal appearance shows the effect of a late supper and lost hours of sleep.

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